GamerZines

FirstLook

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DIAL 9-1-1

INTERVIEW AND PREVIEW

NEED FOR SPEED RIVALS

FirstLook |

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WELCOME TO FirstLook

This month the games industry will literally be changed forever with the Xbox One and PlayStation 4 finally arriving on store shelves, and in this issue we make sure you're ready for this dramatic transformation! We have a whole feature dedicated to the question of which console is right for you, in addition to our regular assortment of previews, features and interviews.

It's just such an exciting time to be a gamer right now and that isn't purely down to new consoles. The arrival of new boxes is exciting, with developers across the globe energised about the potential of crafting unique experiences on new tech, but gaming as a whole has become democratised in a way that hasn't occurred before. Between one-man teams creating blockbusters and Kickstarter projects attracting staggering levels of support, it's clear that the games industry is entering truly uncharted territory. As always, we're here to ensure you don't fall behind.

Enjoy the issue!

Andy Griffiths, Editor
FIRSTLOOK@gamerzines.com

MEET THE TEAM

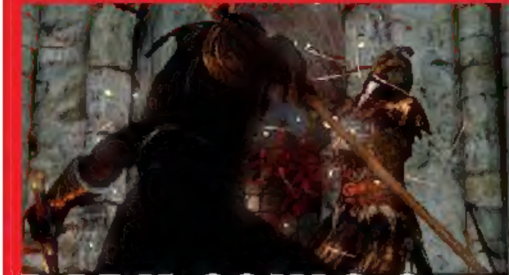
Still pondering gaming's illustrious future…

David Brown
Finally found his ball…

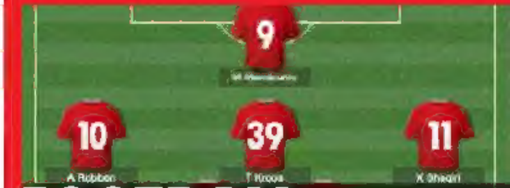
Don't miss!

This month's top highlights!

NEED FOR SPEED RIVALS



DARK SOULS 2



FOOTBALL MANAGER 2014

WWE 2K14

CONSOLE WARS: XBOX ONE VS PLAYSTATION 4

INTERVIEW: CITY OF TITANS

QUICK FINDER

Pinball Arcade
Console Wars: Xbox One vs PlayStation 4
Dark Souls 2
1954: Alcatraz
The Mandate
Football Manager 2014
DLC and UGC Round-up
The Walking Dead: Season 2
City of Titans
Need for Speed Rivals
Putty Squad
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Available features and content may vary by country. Advanced TV hardware required. Games, add-ons, and media content sold separately. Initial setup and some games and features require broadband Internet; ISP fees apply. Online multiplayer, Game DVR, Skype, Netflix, Hulu, ESPN, and the NFL on Xbox One require Xbox Live Gold membership (sold separately) and/or additional requirements. Adaptive AI and Game DVR available in supported games. Titanfall, Kinect Sports: Rivals, Halo for Xbox One, Sunset Overdrive, Quantum Break, Destiny, Watch Dogs, Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag, Elder Scrolls Online, and NBA 2K14 release dates for Xbox One to be announced. See xbox.com/xboxone.

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✓ **BIGGEST** MULTIPLATFORM **GAMES**

Destiny
Watch Dogs
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag
The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt
Elder Scrolls Online
Call of Duty®: Ghosts
NBA 2K14
Madden 25
FIFA 14
Battlefield 4
Tom Clancy's The Division

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PINBALL ARCADE

PUB: SYSTEM 3
DEV: FARBRIGHT GAMES
PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 4
ETA: 29TH NOVEMBER

PRESERVING THE CLASSICS

No matter how much it pains us to admit it, the pinball scene we once knew and loved is dying. With fewer and fewer new creations heading to market every year, and classic designs like Midway's *Cactus Canyon* regularly fetching over $10,000, there's little opportunity to flip a ball on the best tables the planet can offer. While the real world increasingly shuns the fine art of pinball, the digital world is picking up the slack and that's largely down to one developer, Farbright Games and their truly brilliant sim, *Pinball Arcade*. While many pinball games feature fictional tables, Farbright's is focused purely on emulating the greatest tables in gaming history, including modern tables like Bally's *Twilight Zone* to more classic offerings like Gottlieb's *Pro Pool*.

Already *Pinball Arcade* has made its way to every platform that matters, including PC, consoles, phone and tablet, and it's set to debut on the PlayStation 4 when Sony's new console launches this month. Like in the regular game, players will be able to play four tables for free when they download the title, but from there they'll need to pay around £4.99 to play on other tables. Any table can be tried for free up to a certain score though, so you get to appreciate the love that has gone into recreating each table's minutest detail.

With many pinball tables around the world falling into disrepair, it's good to know that at least one studio out there is ensuring that the truly great tables are being preserved digitally for the benefit of generations to come. Currently *Pinball Arcade*'s in-game store boasts over 40 excellent tables from pinball's past, and while all those won't be available for the app's launch on the PlayStation Network, they'll be added in good time. As long as Williams' *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* machine is available to play we'll be smitten with this console release. ■

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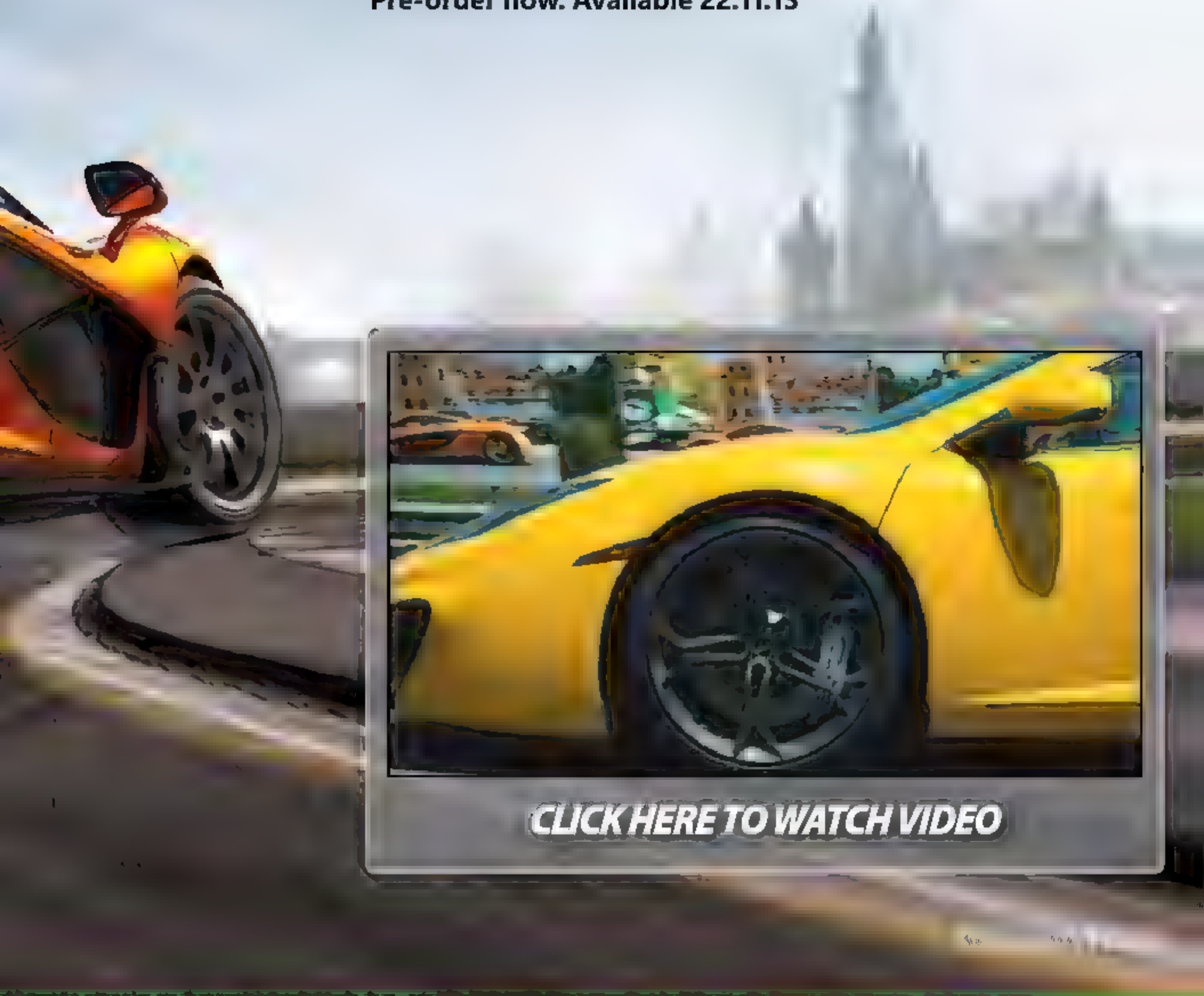


OX ONE

THE WALKING DEAD: SEASON 2

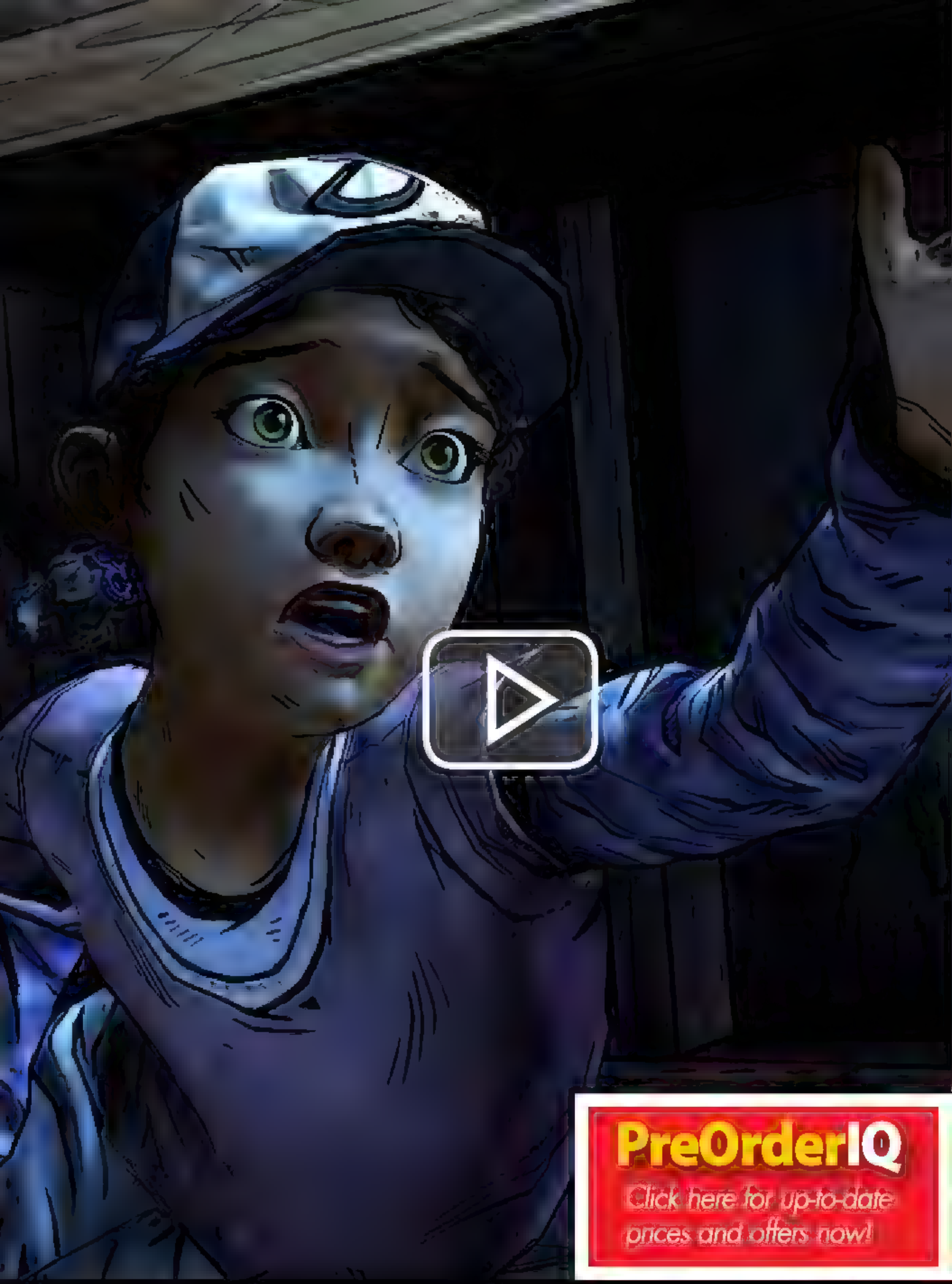
PUB: TELLTALE GAMES
DEV: IN-HOUSE
PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 3, XBOX 360, PC, iOS
ETA: NOVEMBER

CLEMENTINE RETURNS

TRAILER OF THE MONTH

Telltale gave gamers just the kind of Halloween treat they were looking for last month, by releasing the first trailer and details about *The Walking Dead: Season Two*. The previous series ended on the kind of human tragedy *Walking Dead* creator Robert Kirkman would've been proud of, and *Season Two* is sure to carry on that melancholy meandering, with players controlling returning character Clementine. The nine year old no longer has Lee to protect her from the perils of trying to survive in a zombie apocalypse, but at least she still has her trademark baseball cap.

Decisions made during the previous series and the *400 Days* standalone DLC, will also factor into how future episodes play out. We expect plenty of drama and self-sacrifice, in what has fast become the most tense and successful adventure series out there. ■



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Dead Rising 3

Killing zombies has never felt so good!

We'll be the first to admit that we weren't entirely smitten with *Dead Rising*'s apparent new direction. Previous settings Willamette Mall and Fortune City featured colourful characters, memorable locations, and lots of potential for sandbox slaughter fun, but *Dead Rising 3*'s Los Perdidos seemed too brown and barren for our liking. Thankfully it seems our's and everyone else's first impression was wrong. Los Perdidos is huge, diverse and full of lots of psychos to put down including patriot bikers, kung-fu shopkeepers and big, bad bosses based on the seven deadly sins. Capcom Vancouver hasn't gone all serious on us, if anything they've gotten even sillier, with players once again able to combine various household items in an effort to create the ultimate murder tool. Jewels + Torch = Lightsaber, just as they always should.

PUB: CAPCOM
DEV: CAPCOM VANCOUVER
PLAT: XBOX ONE
ETA: 22ND NOVEMBER

Castlevania: Lords of Shadow 2

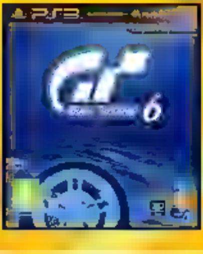
PUB: KONAM
DEV: MERCURYSTEAM
PLAT: PC, XBOX 360, PS3
ETA: 28TH FEBRUARY

Gabriel Belmont returns in *Lords of Shadow 2*, with the luckless 11th Century knight waking up in a modern-day crypt as one of the vampires he swore to fight against. In a twist, Belmont has become known by decent society as 'Dracula' and in order to return to human form he must find the biggest bad guy of all, Satan. Yeah, *Castlevania* has gone all crazy again and we love it!

Gran Turismo 6

PUB: SONY
DEV: POLYPHONY DIGITAL
PLAT: PS3
ETA: 6TH DECEMBER

Sony are pulling out all the stops for *Gran Turismo 6*. Not only have Polyphony Digital secured some of the world's most exciting tracks for inclusion in their racing sim, including Bathurst and Goodwood, but they've also teamed up with the Ayrton Senna Institute to create content associated with *Formula One's* most beloved driver. Excellent!



South Park: The Stick of Truth

PUB: UBISOFT
DEV: OBSIDIAN ENT
PLAT: XBOX 360, PS3, PC
ETA: MARCH

For the second time in so many months, Ubisoft has elected to delay *The Stick of Truth*. Obsidian's RPG is nearly ready for release but *South Park* creators Matt Stone and Trey Parker, who have a massive role in the project as lead writers and more, need more time ensure the game boasts the same feel as the show.

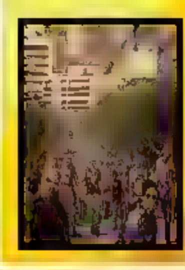
Super Mario 3D World

PUB: NINTENDO
DEV: IN-HOUSE
PLAT: WII U
ETA: 29TH NOVEMBER

Everyone is talking about one choice, Xbox One or PlayStation 4, but no-one should ever underestimate Nintendo. *Super Mario 3D World* is just one of many big titles coming to Wii U this Christmas and we really hope this flagging console can stage a comeback. The more manufacturers in the console war the better.

World of the Living Dead

PUB: SCRAGGLY DOG
DEV: BALLARDIA
PLAT: PC
ETA: 2014



We're just going to leave this teaser image here for a special preview we're running next month. *World of The Living Dead* is a browser MMORPG where players try and survive a zombie apocalypse on a worldwide scale. Visually this game is a little raw, but the potential of this release is huge. You've been warned!

Peggle 2

PUB: EA
DEV: POPCAP GAMES
PLAT: XBOX ONE
ETA: DECEMBER

As far as Xbox One exclusives go, *Peggle 2* has to be one of the strangest. The game was a massive hit on PC, iOS devices and consoles, and even though this game requires no extra hardware oomph, for some reason Microsoft have bought it as a timed exclusive. It's silly season in console town and Microsoft is the lead jester.

XCOM: Enemy Within

PUB: 2K GAMES
DEV: FIRAXIS
PLAT: PC, XBOX 360, PLAYSTATION 4
ETA: 22ND NOVEMBER

We've played through *XCOM: Enemy Unknown* three times this year and with the arrival of *Enemy Within's* new human enemy faction, Exal, we're sure to jump in all over again. Turn-based strategy doesn't get any more engrossing than this and the best thing is, campaigns play out differently every time.

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BRINGING YOU UP TO SPEED ON

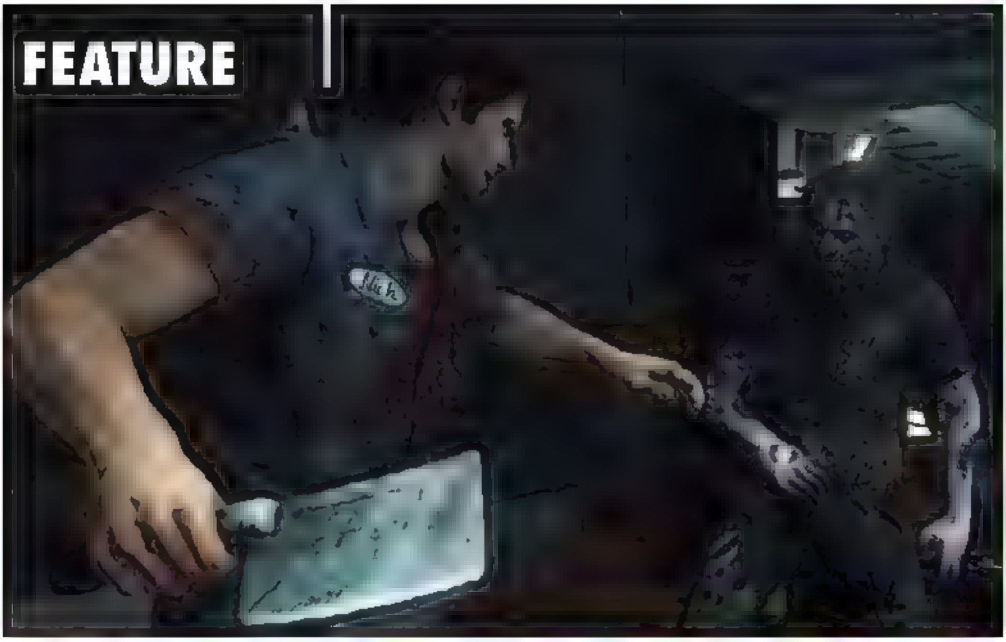
Launch wars, don't you just love them? Not since 2001 have we had such a clash of the console manufacturer giants, when Microsoft launched their misunderstood Xbox versus Nintendo's equally marginalised Gamecube within just one week of each other. This year (this very month in fact) the next chapter in the grand console willy-waggle-a-thon begins, with Microsoft launching the Xbox One in Europe on November 22nd, while Sony offer up the PlayStation 4 on November 29th.

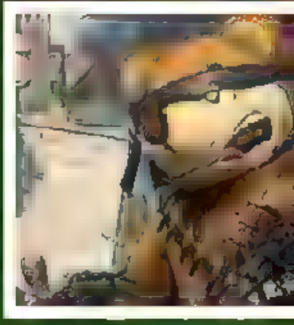
Look at them up there, all shiny and black; not willing to give an inch in the eternal battle to own your living room. Figuring out which potential NSA-snooping device you'd like in your humble abode isn't as tough as you might think though, SONY

N 2013'S BIGGEST CONSOLE FIGHT

with Sony and Microsoft pitching up their branding tents for their respective new hardware a considerable distance away from one another.

Sony are communicating a peace and love vibe to all those who at one point or another may put a game out, with independent developers like *Thomas Was Alone* creator Mike Bithell and *Braid* creator Jonathan Blow both making exclusive games for the PlayStation 4. Those two are just a couple of many who have been won over by Sony's promise of openness and accessibility when it comes to putting out games and being able to regularly update them (a key part of modern games development) on their platform without jumping through confusing certification hoops. Microsoft on the other



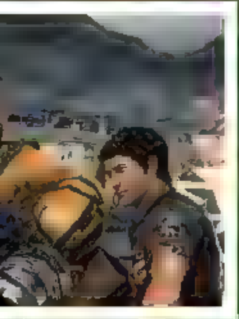


hand have stayed true to the precedents they set with Xbox 360, sticking with the Triple-A studio crowd and buddying up with established publishers like EA and Activision, signing exclusivity deals for games, such as Respawn Entertainment's *Titanfall*, and timed exclusivity for DLC with *Call of Duty: Ghosts*. This tactic worked wonders for them last generation and we suspect it will this generation as well, simply because big and shiny games are more attractive to larger parts of the gaming audience than smaller, potentially more innovative, titles. It's a sad truth of the games industry that the bigger the project is the more of its radical ideas are stripped back in order to avoid any chance of alienating the mass populace. Just look at *Call of Duty: Ghosts* and *Grand Theft Auto V*, two titles which had budgets to rival that of a Hollywood blockbuster but both

THE SHOOTER TO REMEMBER: KILLZONE SHADOW FALL

With *Watch_Dogs* and *Drive*[illegible] delayed [illegible] there's [illegible] expectation pinned on *Killzone* [illegible] than [illegible] series has moved even further into the future with the setting shifting from the depressing brown battlefields of Helghan [illegible] coast [illegible] pesky terrorists looking to [illegible] the series' ever [illegible] war.

We couldn't give a flying fig for the *Killzone* fiction [illegible] say that we enjoyed our time with *Shadow Fall* immensely. The level we sampled featured an incursion into a skyscraper to save some hostages and the scenario was surprisingly multi-faceted with players able to 'go loud' or utilise stealth. That in itself wasn't too novel but the ability to use a drone to scan for enemies and provide fire support certainly was. All in all, *Shadow Fall's* gunplay felt tight, with weapons coming across as both futuristic and realistic with visuals which are frankly unmatched on any console. This will be the launch shooter to remember!

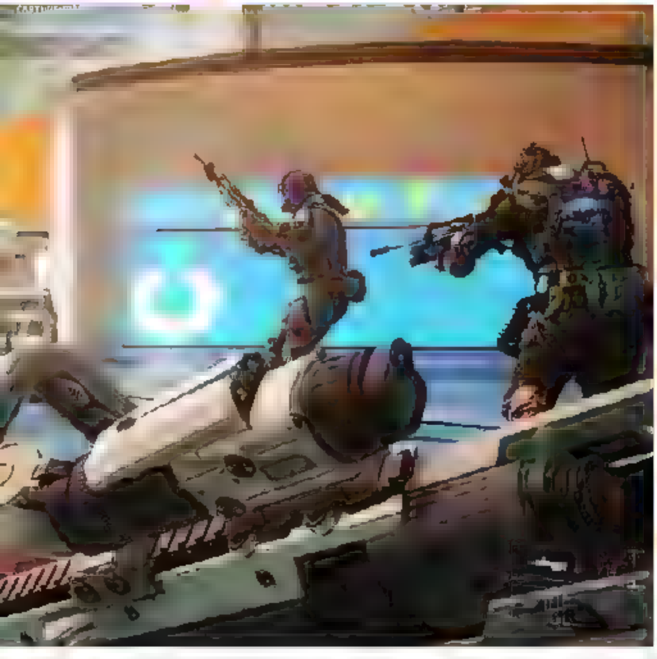


TRIUMPHANT RETURN: DEAD RISING 3

Okay, we'll admit it, we were wrong about *Dead Rising 3*. When the zombie kill-a-thon was first unveiled, we thought Capcom Vancouver were taking the series down a more serious road. The sequel seemed to have none of the character of previous entries and the new open-world setting of Los Perdidos came across bland and uninteresting compared to Fortune City and Willamette Mall. After just 15 minutes with slimmed-down preview code, our opinions were swiftly transformed. The world was large with none of those regular loads of previous games interrupting the action, and the number of zombies on-screen was simply staggering. There was literally a sea of the blighters awaiting the wrath of our freshly combined steamroller flame-cycle, and even when mowing down dozens of zombies at a time there was no slowdown. This is the *Dead Rising* you know and love, only without technical limitations getting in the way.

boasted gameplay that could easily have belonged to their predecessors.

As far as launch lists go, Microsoft's is much more in line with this 'sequel-itis' precedent than Sony's, but the Xbox One definitely has more of what we would call must-play titles. *Forza*, *Dead Rising* and *Killer Instinct* are all names gamers recognise, and to a certain extent trust, whereas Sony just doesn't have a reliable



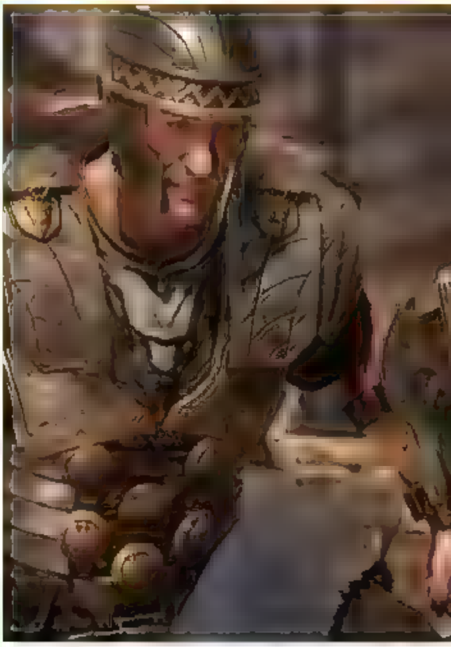
XBOX ONE LAUNCH TITLES (21 IN TOTAL)

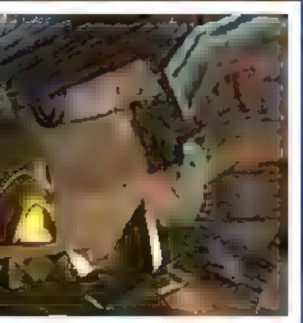
- Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag
- Battlefield 4
- Call of Duty: Ghosts
- Crimson Dragon
- Dead Rising 3
- FIFA 14
- Fighter Within
- Forza Motorsport 5
- Just Dance 2014
- Killer Instinct
- LEGO Marvel Super Heroes
- Lococycle
- Madden NFL 25
- NBA 2K14
- NBA Live 14
- Need for Speed Rivals
- Powerstar Golf
- Ryse: Son of Rome
- Skylanders: Swap Force
- Zoo Tycoon
- Zumba Fitness: World Party

stable of titles to fall back on. Their bigger series, like *Uncharted* and *God of War*, have arguably been bled dry, and *Gran Turismo 6* is, for some strange reason, coming to the PlayStation 3 rather than gracing Sony's next-gen console. Undoubtedly Sony Santa Monica and Naughty Dog will bring their best to the PlayStation 4 when the time comes, but until then Sony's console is very low on exclusives that matter. This point was hammered home to us unavoidably when we attended the Gadget Show at Earl's Court earlier this month. Sony took a sizeable chunk of the floor space, with around 30 PlayStation 4 pods taking over a corner of the convention centre, yet there was only two different games available to sample, *Killzone Shadow Fall* and *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*, the latter of which you can play on Xbox One. Microsoft on the other hand brought one of their

BIGGEST SURPRISE: RYSE: SON OF ROME

Crytek are a studio known for producing great visuals rather than thrilling gameplay, but *Ryse* could be the first time in quite a while that the German studio ticks both of these boxes. Unfortunately, we're yet to sample the new [illegible] campaign, but we did experience its wave-based online mode recently and we came away impressed with the game's combat mechanics. Boasting a similar block-and-reversal system to the *Batman: Arkham* series, gameplay feels appropriately gritty, with players able to dish out heavy hits and quick hits with the opportunity to finish enemies in glorified QTEs. If players match the coloured hue with the appropriate button press, they are rewarded with gloriously bloody multi-stage finishers involving sliced limbs and decapitations. Tasty!





BIGGEST RISK: KNACK

Back in the day, no console manufacturer worth its salt would launch a new platform without a cute new mascot, and we were really hoping *Knack* represented Sony returning to this classic tradition. Unfortunately that hasn't been the case, as since Mark Cerny enthusiastically unveiled this launch title back in February it has played second fiddle to more hardcore titles like *Killzone Shadow Fall* and *Drive Club*. The reasons behind this are [illegible] clear, but seeing as *Knack* is the most original title in the PlayStation 4 launch line-up, it does seem a bit weird. Is Sony Japan's platformer not performing to expectations? We have no idea, but this family-friendly adventure involving an ancient creature fighting a war against goblins on behalf of humankind has a universal appeal, so hiding it away represents a missed opportunity in our book.

Knack has been described as a mix between *Crash Bandicoot*, *Katamari Damacy* and *God of War*, so why not show it to the world? We'll find out the answer to that question as soon as the game launches on November 29th.

shiny off road demo trucks which boasted eight machines, all of which had a different game to play (*FIFA 14*, *Forza Motorsport 5*, *Ryse: Son of Rome*, *Killer Instinct* and more) offering less demo pods yet more variety.

This proved a rather poignant reminder of the

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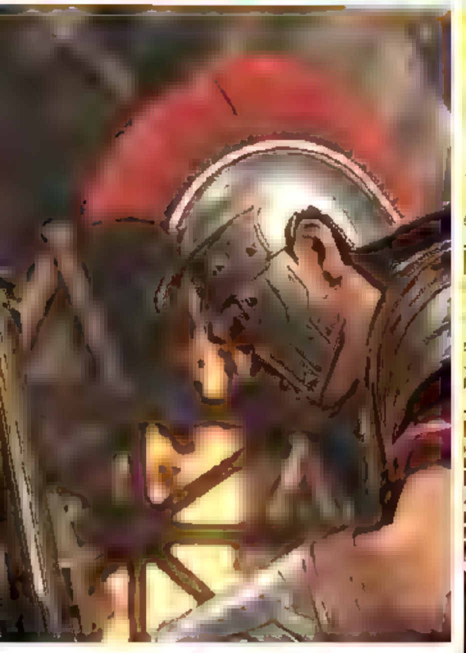


PLAYSTATION 4 LAUNCH TITLES (31 IN TOTAL)

- Angry Birds: Star Wars
- Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag
- Battlefield 4
- Blacklight Retribution
- Call of Duty: Ghosts
- Contrast
- DC Universe Online
- Divekick
- Escape Plan
- FIFA 14
- Flow
- Flower
- Injustice: Gods Among Us
- Just Dance 2014
- Knack
- Killzone Shadowfall
- LEGO Marvel Super Heroes
- Madden NFL 25
- Minecraft
- NBA 2K14
- NBA Live 14
- Need for Speed Rivals
- Pinball Arcade
- Putty Squad
- Resogun
- Skylanders: Swap Force
- Sound Shapes
- Super Motherload
- Tiny Brains
- Warframe
- War Thunder

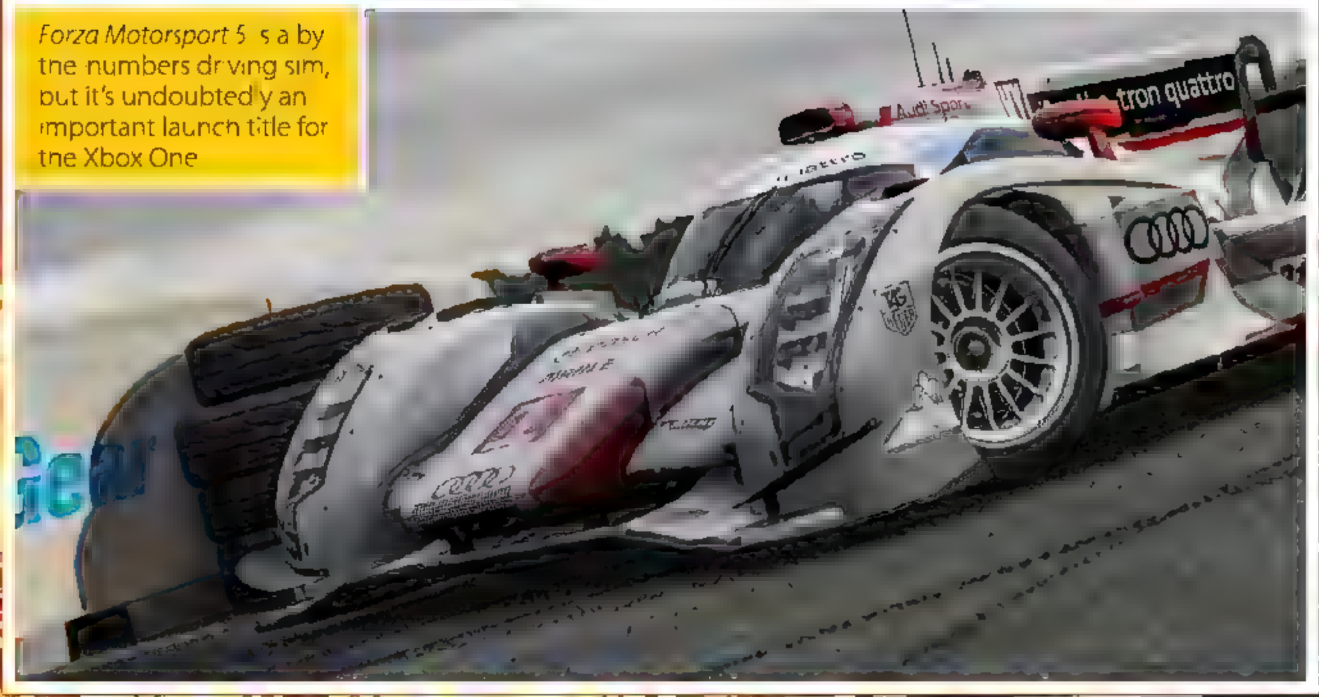
DC Universe Online is the only MMORPG available at launch for either console

damaging delays of Ubisoft's public darling *Watch_Dogs* and the first-party exclusive, *DriveClub*, both of which would have no doubt been playable if they hadn't been delayed into 2014 for more refinement. We will say that *Killzone Shadow Fall* was a great deal more impressive than we were expecting, with some really nifty ideas on how to improve the not-so humble blockbuster shooter, but there's no doubt that the Xbox One has the healthier line-up at launch, with *Forza 5* keeping the gearheads happy, *Dead Rising 3* satisfying everyone's seemingly insatiable need to slay zombies, and a slice of original IP with the surprisingly *Batman*-inspired *Ryse: Son of Rome*. Microsoft have strung together one of the best launch line-ups of any recent console and they,

BEST OF THE REST: THE WII U

Nintendo's tablet-enhanced console is certainly the underdog in the holiday release stakes this year but that doesn't mean their HD console should be underestimated. *The Legend of Zelda: Windwaker HD* and *Pikmin 3* have recently hit store shelves and with *Wii Fit U* and *Super Mario 3D World* coming before the end of the year there's no doubt at least a few families will elect for this console rather than an Xbox One or PlayStation 4. Nintendo has price on their side, with the Wii U recently reduced to £249.99 which is considerably cheaper than the newly emerged competition.

Nintendo has a history of doing things their own way and we wouldn't change them for the world, but this console is crying out for a few more games that don't star Mario or Zelda. Get on it, Big N!

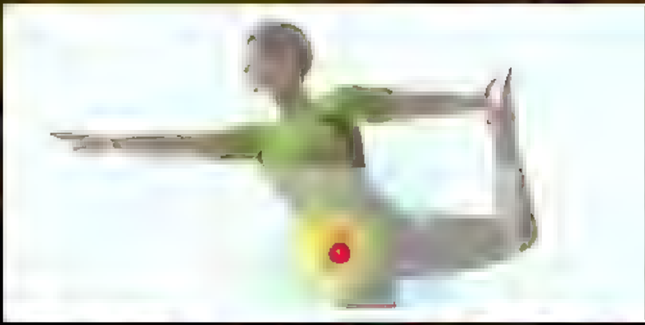


Forza Motorsport 5 is a by the numbers driving sim, but it's undoubtedly an important launch title for the Xbox One

and their army of crunching developers, deserve credit for that.

Obviously no console war was won or lost on opening day, but currently only the Xbox One is getting us tempted to plonk down some pre-order pounds, and that's purely down to Microsoft's u-turn on their controversial digital DRM policies and the fact that they have the most IPs we actually care about at launch.

No doubt there will be many twists and turns in this grand console face-off, as more third party publishers show their hand and Nintendo finally get around to righting the sinking ship that is the Wii U, but now all the major players are in play the competition to dominate the eighth console generation can really begin! ■



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The Da

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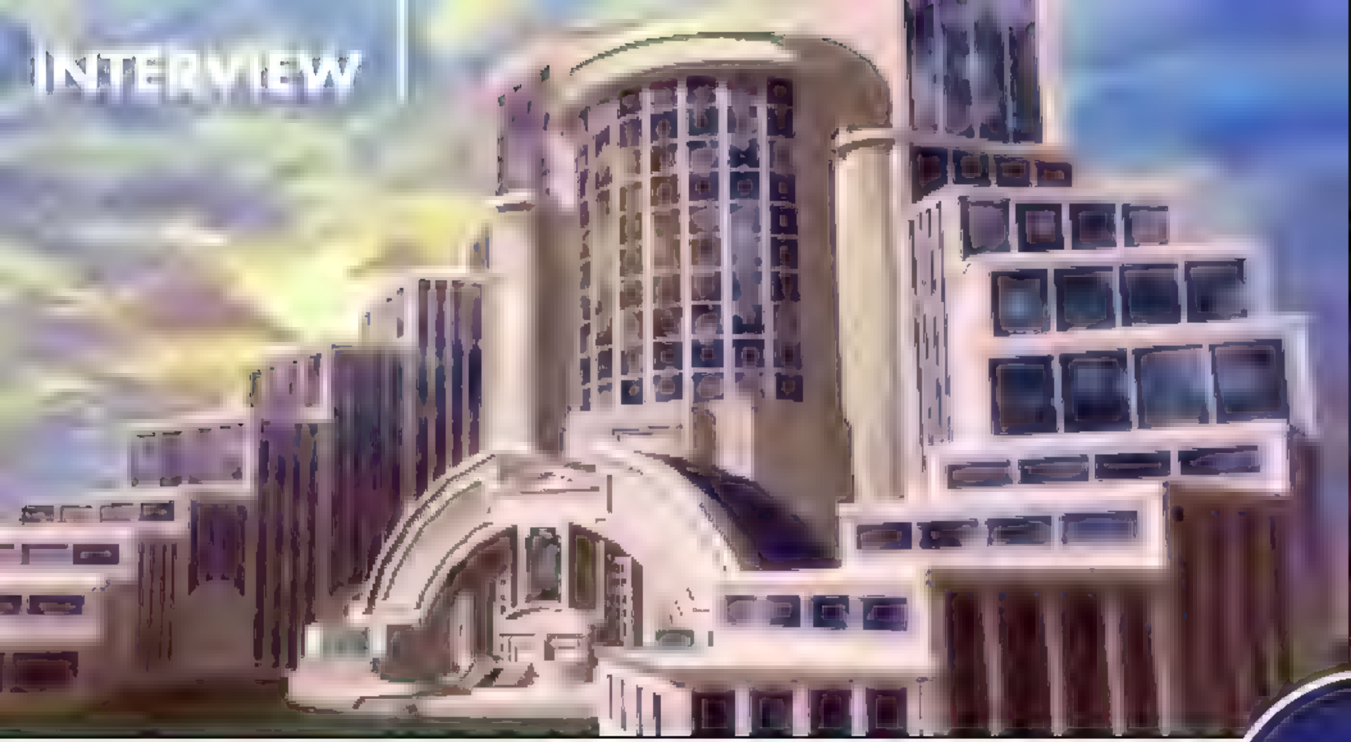


SARA QUINN
CITY OF TITANS INTERVIEW

EXC
AS

We learn more about Kickstarter's latest suc

PUB: MISSING WORLDS MEDIA
DEV: IN-HOUSE
PREVIOUS GAME: N/A
PLATFORMS: PC
ETA: EARLY 2014

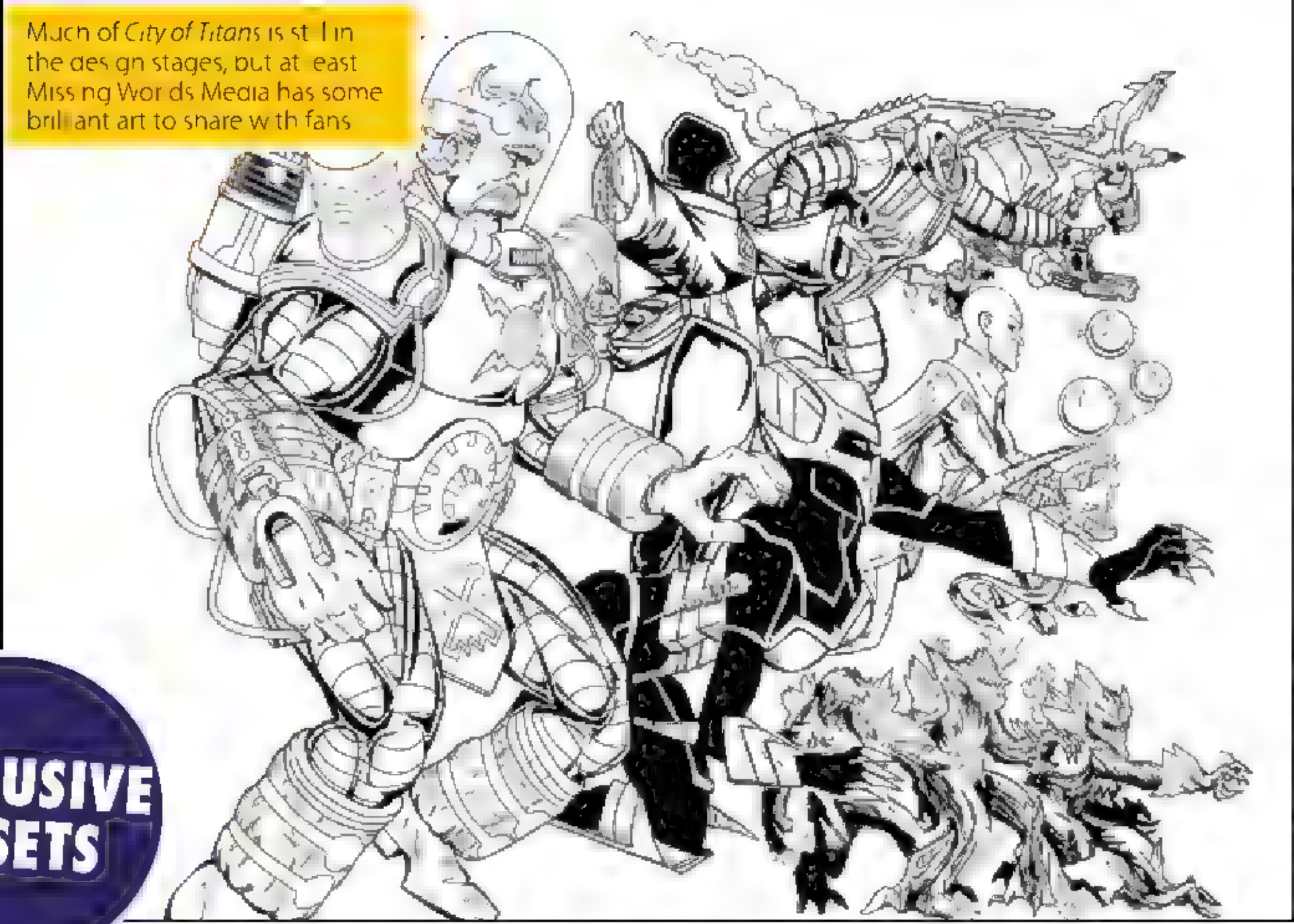
BIO

Sara Quinn is the President of Missing Worlds Media, a rapidly growing collective of volunteers who are in the process of creating a spiritual successor to *City of Heroes*.

When *City of Heroes* was closed by NCSOFT last year, eight years after it launched, thousands of comic book-loving gamers suddenly found themselves without an online home. Some cursed the heavens that the game which they loved was no longer live, others moved on, and a dedicated few banded together to develop their own spiritual successor to Paragon Studios' beloved release. *City of Titans* was born, and over the past six weeks the project has accumulated over $600,000 in funding from fans, successfully securing the game's future and eventual launch.

We sat down with President of Missing Worlds Media, Sara Quinn, to get an insight into this crazy crowd-funded development journey...

First of all, congratulations on hitting your funding target. Sorry, did we say hitting? We meant absolutely obliterating! Can you describe what the past month has been like for the *City of Titans* team? Your video addresses to fans have been really emotional.
This has been a combination of exhilarating and terrifying for all of us. Having our work evaluated and scrutinised by so many people (and getting their approval) means we now have even more riding on our success… it's amazing. I'm not particularly good at being The

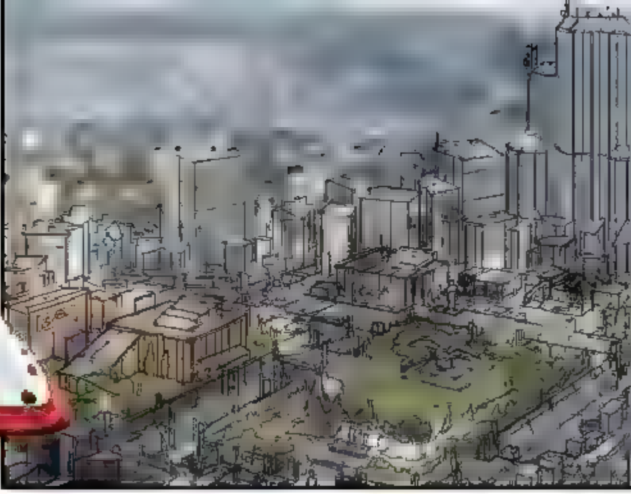


Much of *City of Titans* is still in the design stages, but at least Missing Worlds Media has some brilliant art to share with fans

LUSIVE
SETS

Great Stoneface, and the first KS video was my first time recording a speech rather than speaking to a group, so I know I am not as polished as I would like, but I actually like it that people seem to get that I am speaking sincerely, not just saying what I think are the right things. [During] the second video, I was almost crying with joy, not so much because of the money but because this meant we had gotten it right so far, we were successfully staying in tune with our community.

Missing Worlds Media has a rather unique structure, with developers all collaborating to the project remotely. How challenging is that infrastructure to organise?
Very challenging. You have all the usual personality variables to account for, plus time zones and when each volunteer is available during the day, since most are working around a day job. I actually have no worries about our technical capability – as long as we can stay integrated then the game will definitely be awesome. Fortunately, we have some great managers, so I think now that the Kickstarter is over, we can settle into a good working flow without too much difficulty.



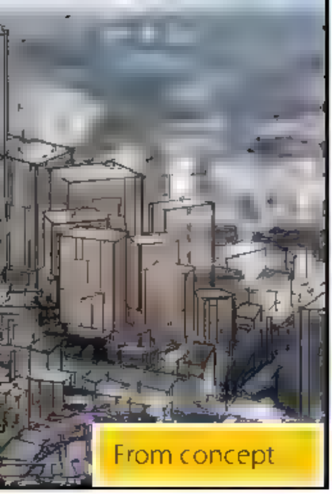
Your Kickstarter pitch was really classy and detailed, especially for a project which is based mostly on righting the wrong of *City of Heroes* being closed before its time last year. How difficult was it to not write a bunch of anti-NCSOFT propaganda in the pitch?

We tried to keep the pitch about what we were doing and what we admired, with no negativity anywhere. There is already plenty of bad feeling floating around about what happened, but we are focused on the good we can do in the future, not what was done in the past. Once we got into that focus, it actually was pretty easy to keep it classy.

> WE TRIED TO KEEP THE PITCH ABOUT WHAT WE WERE DOING AND WHAT WE ADMIRED, WITH NO NEGATIVITY ANYWHERE

How mindful of *City of Heroes* are the team? Obviously *City of Titans* is very much its own thing, but you are clearly riffing off Paragon Studios' game.

Very. We're not going to do anything purely because *CoH* did it; if it doesn't work with the updates, then we will modify it. On the other hand, they did a lot right and we are looking at all aspects to see which ones continue to kick ass, so that we



From concept

...to implementation. Is it us, or does Titan City look a little bit like Vancouver?

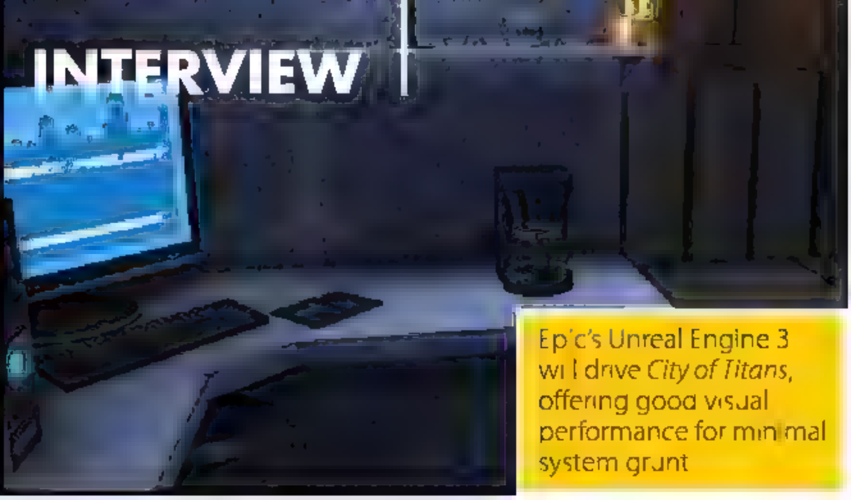
can integrate them into the final *City of Titans* game.

Did Missing Worlds Media get in contact with NCSOFT before *City of Titans* was pitched to Kickstarter? Were you ever worried that their lawyers would intervene to protect their IP?
There has been some quiet communication, in which we felt one another out a bit, seeing what stance to take moving forward. As long as we don't get too close to the actual *CoH* IP, we don't expect any more trouble from them than from any number of other possibly litigious entities.

Subscription MMORPGs are making a comeback with *Elder Scrolls Online*, *WildStar* and yourselves utilising the model. Why did you guys go for it?
Overall, because we need a reliable ongoing revenue stream if we want to be able to plan our resource usage, which is even more important for us than many MMOs, because we have so much variability in areas that are usually more stable, such as workforce.

***City of Heroes* evolved so much over its eight years. Are you worried that *City of Titans* players will expect too much from the game at launch?**
A bit, but it's pretty much my job to worry. With our stretch goals, we are promising a lot at launch, and my goal is to make sure that everything we put out is quality content. Producing a huge mass of mediocre content would kill us, so we are being careful not to promise more than we can provide with real polish. There's no need to worry, as we want all the same shinies our players do, so they will be in there, and even things we can't provide at launch are being planned for – there are hooks and so on, so that we don't have to shoehorn them in later.

Have any publishers got in touch to offer some monetary assistance to *City of Titans*? Would you be open to help if a publisher came knocking?
Not yet, although we have gotten some 'come talk to us in a year' comments. We will definitely be open to investment in the future, but we do not plan to



Epic's Unreal Engine 3 will drive *City of Titans*, offering good visual performance for minimal system grunt

go the standard route, where the entity providing the money has the power of life or death over the project. I don't think we could keep our volunteers under those conditions, and I don't think the community would stand for it.

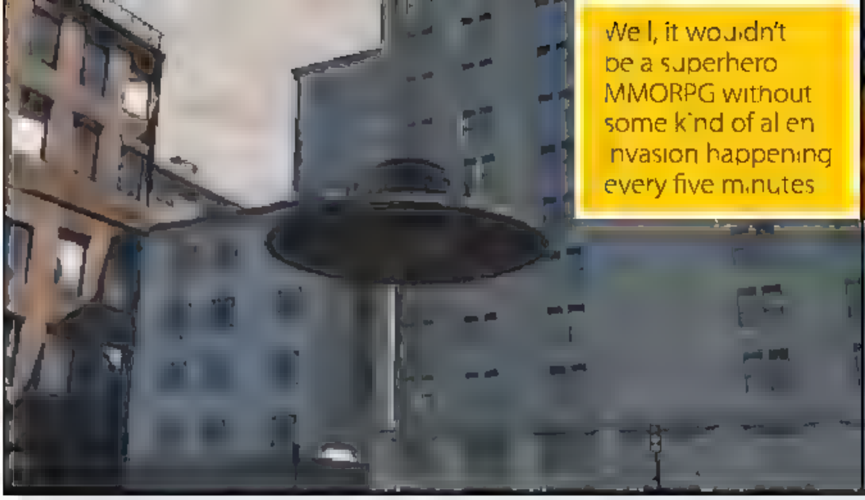
We are looking for investors who are more interested in the benefits they can reap from getting involved in a project that has such strong community ties and good relations with the fan base than in maximising monetary return, and I think once we have fully proven that the project will continue with or without additional funds, we will be in a very strong negotiating position to find that.

Have any developers from Paragon Studios reached out to you with their support, guidance, etc.?

Several, and we are definitely happy to have the benefit of their experience and insight. We have actually had one volunteer join the project, and we are investigating whether or not that would constitute continuity between Paragon and MWM from a legal standpoint. We would love to have

> “THE MOST EXPENSIVE PART OF ALMOST ANY ENDEAVOUR IS USUALLY LABOUR, AND OUR VOLUNTEER WORKFORCE REMOVES THAT COST”

"So where to, buster?"



Well, it wouldn't be a superhero MMORPG without some kind of alien invasion happening every five minutes

them, but we have to be very careful to avoid putting ourselves in a shaky legal situation.

Over $600,000 has been pledged to *City of Titans*, but in MMORPG budget terms that amount gets eaten up very quickly. How will you maintain the quality of the game while pinching the pennies?

Well, the most expensive part of almost any endeavour is usually labour, and our volunteer workforce removes that cost, but they do still need tools. The budget listed on the KS goes into detail as to what we plan to use it for, which is primarily software and hardware so that everyone has the tools they need to do their particular job, plus media resources and legal consultation. Other than that, it's largely expenses, like the cost of sending someone to a convention so that they can promote the project.

We will maintain quality by focusing on things that are mostly manpower-intensive, rather than money intensive, like having excellent plots and intuitive user interfaces, and by finding low-cost ways to create or source standard media resources, like textures or models. We are also using a staged release system, so that a finished section of the game, like the Avatar Builder, can help to fund the development of later sections.

Now that the Kickstarter funding drive has finished, how can wannabe players contribute to *City of Titans*?

We aim to have a web store up about a month after the Kickstarter. We want to make sure we are done and sorted out with regard to all the physical perks before we start something new. It will sell some of the same merchandise that is available as KS add-ons (note that some are KS-exclusive, and won't be available in the store), and some new items, plus of course different items over time. We are also investigating possible paths to allow people in Europe who have some problems with the KS payment gateways to contribute as well, but currently nothing final. ■

City of Titans is projected to launch towards the end of 2014. To find out more about this exciting new MMORPG, check out City of Titans.com.

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PLATFORMS [illegible]
ETA [illegible]

Connected Carnage

EA's *Need for Speed* series has gone through dramatic and far-reaching changes this year, but you wouldn't necessarily know that from playing *Rivals*. For a long time the *Need for Speed* franchise has shifted between different studios, all of which had their own opinions on how to push the franchise forward. EA Black Box took the story-driven route with *The Run*, Slightly Mad Studios shirked aside the city setting, electing for a more traditional track racer, and Criterion harked back to the series arguably most popular roots with Cop versus Racer gameplay in *Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit*. All those different directions led to gamers not knowing the type of racing experience they were going to get whenever they picked up a new iteration in this annual sea series, with gameplay, premise, and structure all changing year-on-year.

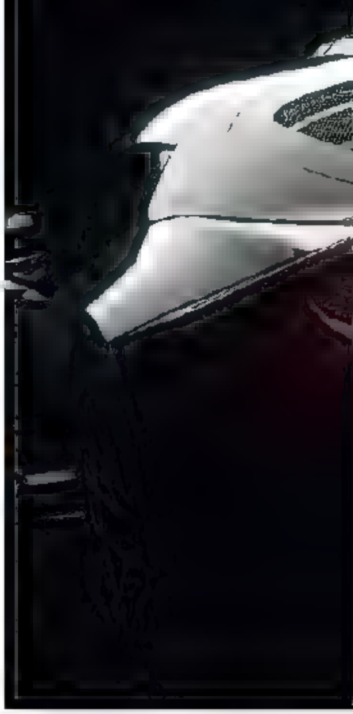
With *Rivals*, *Need for Speed*'s needless chopping and changing

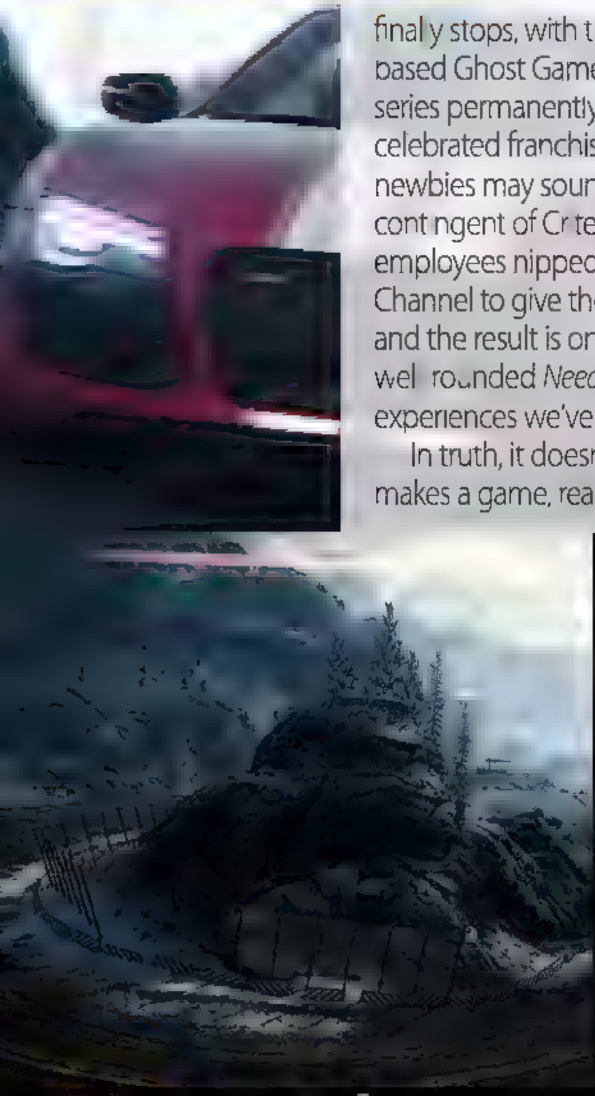
GHOST
TOYO TIRES
SPEEDHUNTERS

WEST
62
Base Point Dr

"With Rivals, Need for Speed's needless chopping and changing finally stops"

Cars can be customised, with players unlocking new liveries, rims and paint colours as they race and gain levels





finally stops, with the Gothenburg-based Ghost Games taking over the series permanently. Giving such a celebrated franchise to a bunch of newbies may sound crazy, but a large contingent of Criterion Software employees nipped over the English Channel to give the Swedes a hand, and the result is one of the most well rounded *Need for Speed* experiences we've played for years.

In truth, it doesn't matter who makes a game, really. What matters is the game itself, and *Need for Speed Rivals* is very much an evolution of the open-world cops versus racers formula Criterion Software revived with 2010's *Hot Pursuit*.

Before heading into the all-new open-world of Redview County, players elect to either roll out as a cop or a racer, with two entirely different progression paths associated with each. Rather than adopting the heavily structured critical path of either *Hot Pursuit* or *Most Wanted*,

TRUE NEXT-GEN?

During our hands-on session we had a chance to play *Rivals* on both PC and PlayStation 4, and with completely honesty we can say we noticed little difference between the two versions. The console version was locked at 30 frames per second at 1080p resolution, and we couldn't tell whether a similar constraint was applied to the PC version. Whichever platform players choose, they're sure to get an assuredly pretty driving experience though, with high-resolution car models, liberal use of particle effects and nifty little atmospheric touches like rain drops appearing as though they're accumulating on the screen in wet conditions.

NTERVIEW

CRAIG SULLIVAN

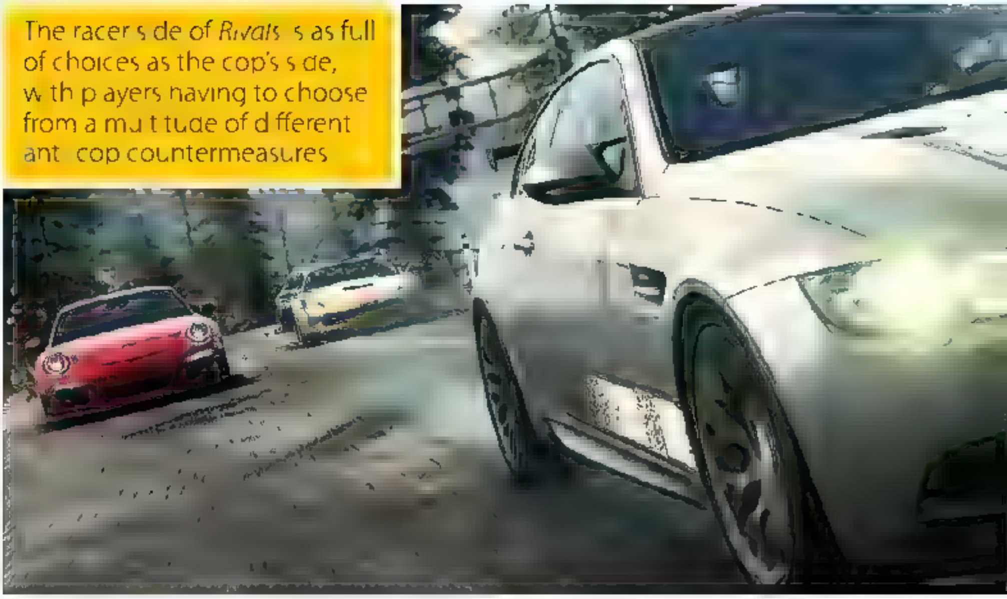
Creative Director

Rivals is much more freeform, with a new 'Assignment' system dictating level progression and rewards. The goals of this new system change per level, from tagging a number of competitors to completing a specific type of event. Once completed, the player then needs to travel to a safehouse/police station to rank up, withnew car, livery, and cash unlocks offering new customisation and racing options.

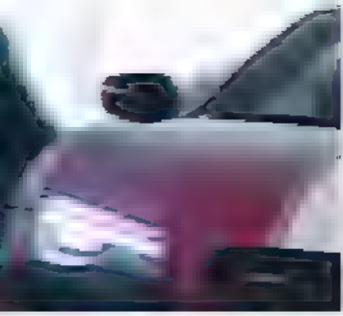
This level of freedom may seem a bit strange for a series which has traditionally been so hand-holdy, but it allows the new AllDrive system to flourish. This system seamlessly combines single-player and multiplayer game modes into one cohesive environment. For instance, during one event we were chasing down a CPU 'perp' while playing as a cop during a Chase mission, only for a pair of human drivers to tear around the corner behind us and accelerate past, offering up new prey for pursuit. We broke off chasing the ›

There seems to be a bit of confusion about the status of past *Need for Speed* developer Criterion Software. Can you tell us what's happening with that studio at the moment and how they've helped with the development of *Rivals*?
Ultimately, this game is being made by many people around the world, but the core team is based in Gothenburg and they started around two years ago. It was pretty much this year from January onwards that myself and 65 of the really talented guys at Criterion got involved. We have a bunch of new and really talented guys, and a bunch of guys who have shipped a lot of driving games before. Then we have other people helping out from Visceral in Vancouver and guys from Shanghai working on stuff too. We had as many people as we could, pushing really hard to make this game as good as possible.

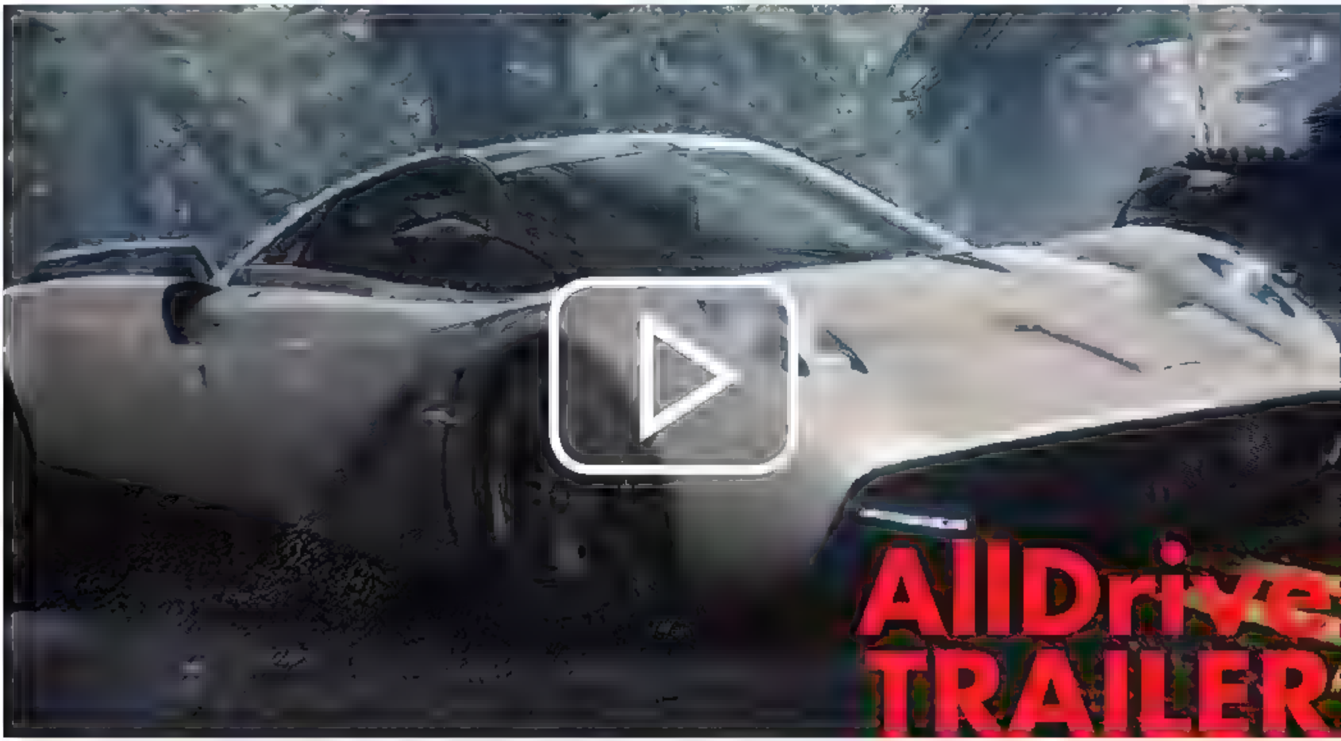
Would you say that confusion about Criterion Software's existence is frustrating for you?
Honestly, I think it's just the natural evolution. I know when people look at it from the outside, there are lots of rumours and people certain assuming things happened. The fact is that Criterion finished *Need for Speed: Most Wanted* last year, *Need for Speed Rivals* was being worked on over in Gothenburg and they were already a year into the project. You get downtime as soon as you finish a game, so it was obvious *Need for Speed Rivals* was shipping this year. We would be silly not to use the experience of the guys at Criterion to help us to make the game as good as possible. Myself and a few guys started late last year/early this year and then we gradually ramped up, getting more and more people [from Criterion].
The game is big right? You need a lot of people on it. It ended up that we had a lot of people working on *Need for Speed*. Alex [Ward, Criterion's Creative Director] and Fiona [Sperry, Criterion's Studio Director] were working on their own little idea in the background with the core Criterion guys, and it came to a point where we wanted to make decisions about where people were focused. Alex and Fiona were focused on their own idea and building that up and nurturing it, but that idea was ultimately not going to become a *Need for Speed* game, so of course it made sense for the amazing driving experience that we had to switch over and become part of Ghost. That was ultimately what happened. Alex and Fiona were working with their group at Criterion

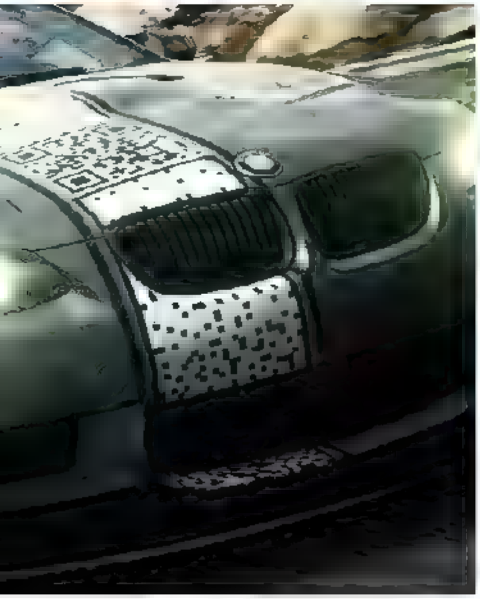


The racer's side of *Rivals* is as full of choices as the cop's side, with players having to choose from a multitude of different anti-cop countermeasures



CPU car to try and nab the more unpredictable human racers, and the result was a chase which lasted five minutes as we aimed spike strips, road blocks, EMPs and helicopter surveillance at our tricky foes. We cornered the Mercedes Benz R8 Coupe racer easily, but the Ferrari F12 Berlinetta escaped our grasp after driving off a cliff edge and landing on the road below. AllDrive accommodates these moments easily without any load times, so it is perhaps only natural that *NFS's* single-player impetus seems to have been dialled back. We were told that there will be a story-driven campaign in *Rivals*, but without seeing that





content for ourselves, it's hard to gauge its value. We were told as many as six cops could run through the game together in co-op, sharing events, points and progression, so as many as six racers can accommodate the open-world at the same time. All the leaderboard and event metadata comparison of AutoLog also returns, subtly tempting players to own events in competition with friends.

> "All the leaderboard and event metadata comparison of AutoLog also remains"

On the handling side of things, *Rivals* strays into the slidy ground of *Hot Pursuit*, with players able to drift around corners regardless of conditions with new ice, sleet, rain and blazing sunshine weather subtly altering the rate of traction achieved on tarmac. Don't expect the driving model to suddenly become exceptionally challenging in wet

on the new idea and we were working on *Need for Speed Rivals*. There was never anything more to it than just a natural evolution on who wanted to work on what, and where the focus needed to go.

Do you think those developers who are helping at Ghost now can switch back to Criterion in the future?
Certainly, some of the people that worked on *Rivals* will end up helping out on the next Criterion game. Again, it would be silly not to have that happen right? There's a bunch of really talented developers in Guildford. Yes, they are working on *Rivals* right now, but *Rivals* is almost done. They need other stuff to do as well. These guys are hungry and they want be working on games all the time and pushing out quality. Criterion are early days on their ideas but they want to do some really cool stuff, so of course people will want to help out on that as well.

When you look at it, these kind of things happen with many teams across the industry now. Games are so big, and take so many hundreds of people to make. It is the natural ebb and flow that people and expertise (and experience especially) goes to wherever they're needed best. It's healthy for people to work on different stuff as well, so it's a perfectly natural thing. The industry, and more importantly players, benefit from it as well.

That sounds like a really fluid design process, but ultimately won't players lose out if they aren't sure which developers from which studio are helping out on the design of a game?
If you asked me do players really notice or care? My honest answer would be 50% of the people who buy games have a rough understanding of who the developer is, but they know that *Need for Speed* is an EA game first then they might notice second if it's a Criterion game, a Ghost game or whatever.
I speak to lots of people who don't follow the industry closely and they know that *FIFA* is an EA game, but they don't know the studio behind it so well. They know that Battlefield is a DICE game because that brand has become synonymous with it, but when you have a brand which has moved around as much as *Need for Speed* has then it's different. That's why we went out there and said, "Ghosts is taking over the creative leadership of *Need for Speed* for the future." It's the right thing to do so that people are guaranteed of a certain level of quality whenever a *Need for Speed* game comes out.

TO READ THE REST OF THE INTERVIEW ONLINE CLICK HERE

"Ghost Games' debut offers unpredictable driving fun in a familiar, albeit innovative, connected mould"

FirstLook | Preview

Traffic is now much more likely to make cars crash out than they were in *Most Wanted*

conditions, but these sudden and seamless weather changes add an additional element of drama to racing. As we were travelling around the mountainous regions of Redview, the weather was changing regularly with an array of different lighting and particle effects bombarding the screen, and it looked stunning.

Sliding around corners still feels sublime yet nuanced, with players able to slightly tweak backend movement to stay closer to an apex. We did notice that cars are much more susceptible to spinning around completely if chucked into corners too aggressively, but that definition of 'aggressively' is still well within the realms of *Need for Speed*'s classic arcade values.

The act of checking cars has also been greatly improved, with collisions taking into account weight of vehicles in addition to their velocity, much like in last year's *Most Wanted*. While playing over a localised network collision detection seemed accurate, but obviously the devil will be in the detail of the netcode. With an emphasis on seamless multiplayer integration, it would be silly to think that Ghost Games haven't tweaked the occasionally wonky netcode of *Most Wanted*, and from what we played the collision detection seemed spot on with none of the ghost hits of last year's game.

Need for Speed Rivals is the kind of next-gen arcade racer the world has been crying out for. Ghost Games' debut offers unpredictable driving fun in a familiar, albeit innovative, connected mould. It's taken some time to find a proper home, but it seems that *Need for Speed* is finally in the right hands. ■

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> "Booting up Dark Souls II at 7am on a sleepy Sunday morning is perhaps something only a sadomasochist would do"

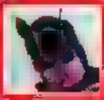
DARK SOULS II

HANDS-ON

PUB: NAMCO BANDAI
DEV: FROM SOFTWARE
LAST GAME: [illegible]
VERDICT DAY
PLATFORM: PC, XBOX 360
[illegible]
ETA: 14TH MARCH

TWITTER

@DarkSoulsGame
10 more minutes until the beta! Just waiting patiently, listening to some music, and watching... [illegible]



@BajoPants
In the last few months I played 4 hours of Dark Souls 2. It has made all other games feel like a [illegible]

@TheGamingBen
[illegible] Dark Souls [illegible] have to be up at 7AM on [illegible]

TWEET US @GAMERZINES

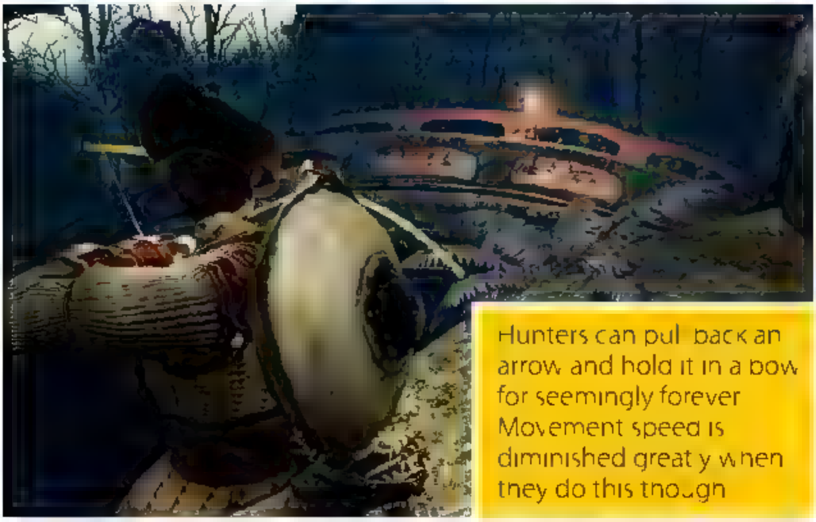
A rewarding kind of attrition

The notorious, hard as nails, fantasy series *Dark Souls* has attracted a cult following over the years, thanks to its devilishly pedantic enemy placement and aggressive environmental design. While some players will inevitably switch off the game in a rage the nineteenth time they've fallen down a hole in a darkened cave, been skewered by a giant, swinging pointy door or knocked off a cliff edge by an ambushing enemy, there will be a dedicated few who store their frustration, regroup and attempt that dungeon run all over again. Safe in the knowledge that their last death has given them the insight they need to push on further.

Dark Souls II doesn't shift up this intimidating formula much, but From Software has made a bunch of subtle tweaks to the core gameplay that make the sequel seem like a fresh and intimidating challenge. All of these insights are based on a recent PlayStation 3-exclusive Beta, so bear in mind that some observations may change before this sequel launches in 2014.

Booting up *Dark Souls II* at 7am on a sleepy Sunday morning is perhaps something only a sadomasochist would do, but that was the proposition presented to us and other PlayStation Plus users if they wanted to sample the aforementioned fantasy sequel early. Surprisingly, servers were absolutely packed with people, leaving helpful and not so helpful messages around the open world, such as *"Imminent Despair... in short imminent happiness"*, and

Bonfires function as save/health refill points, but be careful, if you use them you reset the world and respawn any slain enemies



Hunters can pull back an arrow and hold it in a bow for seemingly forever Movement speed is diminished greatly when they do this though

carefully marshalling their chosen Soldier, Warrior, Sorcerer, Temple Knight, Hunter or Dual Swordsman around a small snippet of the final game named 'Huntman's Corpse'. The area itself was typical of environments in previous games, boasting skinny cliff edges, stupidly powerful Black Phantoms and a constant feeling of tension based around the questions: Am I going the right way? Can I sneak past that bloody big monster? Surely a bonfire (save/res point) isn't too far away, right?

Learning the proper way to tackle an area is still very much a case of trial and error, but the presence of other player's ghosts or souls appearing in the environment, cataloguing their last acts before their untimely demise, gives exploration a funny and surprisingly tense vibe all at the same time. Offering the player a clue of what awaits them in the next area while at the same time

The Temple Knight character class looks impressive, but he's just too slow to be effective – at least in our hands

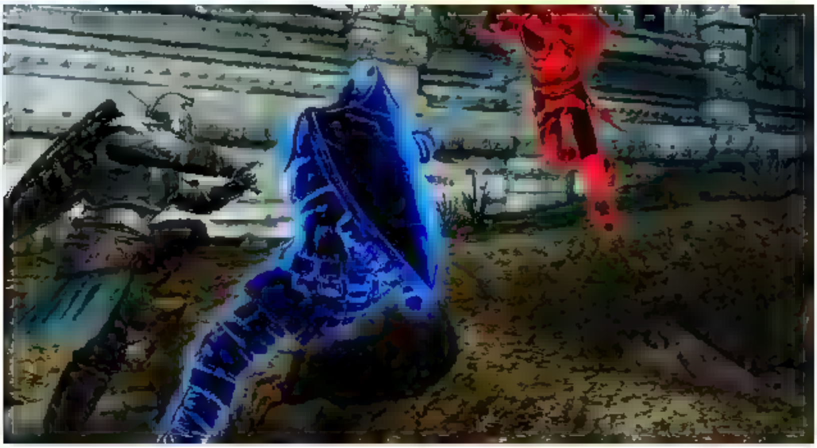
warning them, "Yeah this next bit is a bit of a doozy".

Of course, this is the formula that led both *Demon's Souls* and *Dark Souls* to become such cherished experiences by a significant portion of the gaming community, and the sequel unsurprisingly doesn't change that. The changes that have been made fall more in line with tweaks rather than big overhauled features. Movement animations have been tightened and feel more responsive, with a noticeable feeling of weight coming across, dependent on your class choice.

> *"Am I going the right way? Can I sneak past that bloody big monster? Surely a bonfire isn't too far away, right?*

For our playthroughs we tried running with the Temple Knight but we found his Halbard and Crescent Axe far too unwieldy for the nimble enemies we faced. After dying multiple times trying to kill lowly zombie-like creatures, we started a new Huntsman character and found her capacity for sword and shield combat mixed with the ranged potential of a bow much more satisfying than her clunky cousin. We were surprised to see that her bow could be charged with an arrow permanently, taking out many enemies in a few carefully placed

Messages from other players are written in blood on the earth, with some offering more help than others



Watching the ghostly souls of other players failing gives you an insight into what awaits around the next corner

shots, but then we suspect that'll be tweaked in the final version. We also noticed that the reliable Soldier class now has the option to switch between three weapons rather than two, in an effort to make the class more diverse. The impressively destructive backstab attack also makes its return in *Dark Souls II*, with players having to dodge and position their characters directly behind a foe to carry off the move. The window for pulling off this manoeuvre seems even smaller than before, but when achieved, the animation and subsequent slish-slosh sound is very satisfying.

Unfortunately our time with *Dark Souls II* only consisted of two hours, but we had enough time to fiddle around with a few classes, die repeatedly and get to what was effectively the final boss fight, which involved slaying the Grim Reaper who could kill off our multiple-levelled character

We aren't sure if difficulty ramps up when players summon others to help them in co-op, but it would be really silly if it didn't

in a few hits. That wasn't the only trick up the cloaked one's sleeve though. He also could reanimate skeletons around him, even after we killed them, and if that wasn't enough, his cave dwelling was also lined with multiple black holes to fall through, which were practically undetectable without a torch.

> "We had enough time to fiddle around with a few classes, die repeatedly and get to what was effectively the final boss"

The only thing we couldn't sample during the Beta was how the game's four player co-op and competitive PvP worked, but with network performance still being tweaked, it would be unfair to make any assumptions at this point. The same goes for the overabundance of life gems rewarded while playing. We suspect the drop rate will be tweaked prior to launch.

When *Dark Souls II* was first revealed there were lengthy discussions about whether this series was being dumbed down in pursuit of the casual dollar. We're pleased to report that from what we played that talk seems to be completely inaccurate.

If anything, *Dark Souls II* is just as tough as it was before, only now it has snappier combat, prettier magic, and a bunch of new combative options for forum dwellers to argue over in pursuit of the 'ultimate build'. The PlayStation 4 and Xbox One will have been out for months by the time *Dark Souls II* appears on shelves, but the sequel's arrival proves that the soon to be previous console generation still has a few gems to offer up yet.

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1954: ALCATRAZ

PREVIEW

PUB: DAEDALIC ENTERTAINMENT
DEV: IRRESPONSIBLE GAMES
LAST GAME: N/A
PLATFORM: PC
ETA: 2014

"Ain't prison life grand?"

As far as settings go, there are few more iconic than Alcatraz Island. America's long-closed yet infamous penitentiary has been the stage for numerous films, books, plays and television series, but as far as we're aware, there hasn't been a game set in the prison yet.

Irresponsible Games are looking to change all that with a beautiful, albeit it traditional, point-and-click adventure starring a robber named Joe and his long-suffering wife Christine. Both of whom are struggling to put their lives back together since Joe landed himself in the slammer after pulling off an armoured car robbery. Where things get really interesting though is that through the 15-hour story arc, players control both Joe stuck inside Alcatraz and his wife Christine who is carrying on her life outside of the prison, regularly getting hassled by Joe's former hoodlum buddies, eager to learn the location of all the money he stole.

This adds an interesting new dimension to the game's branching, moral decision-based, plot, as both Joe and Christine can essentially screw each other over for their own personal gain. We were shown a brief gameplay demo involving the forcefully separated couple during a prison visit, with Joe talking to his wife behind glass over a telephone. Here we could select all of Joe's responses, but once back on land the control shifted to Christine who was met by two gangsters pressuring her for information on

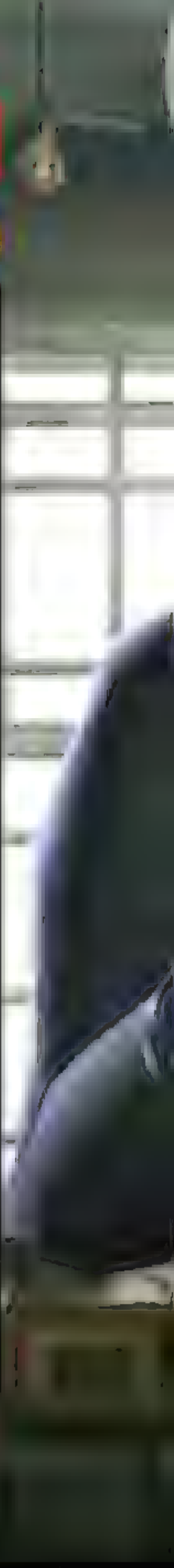
TWITTER

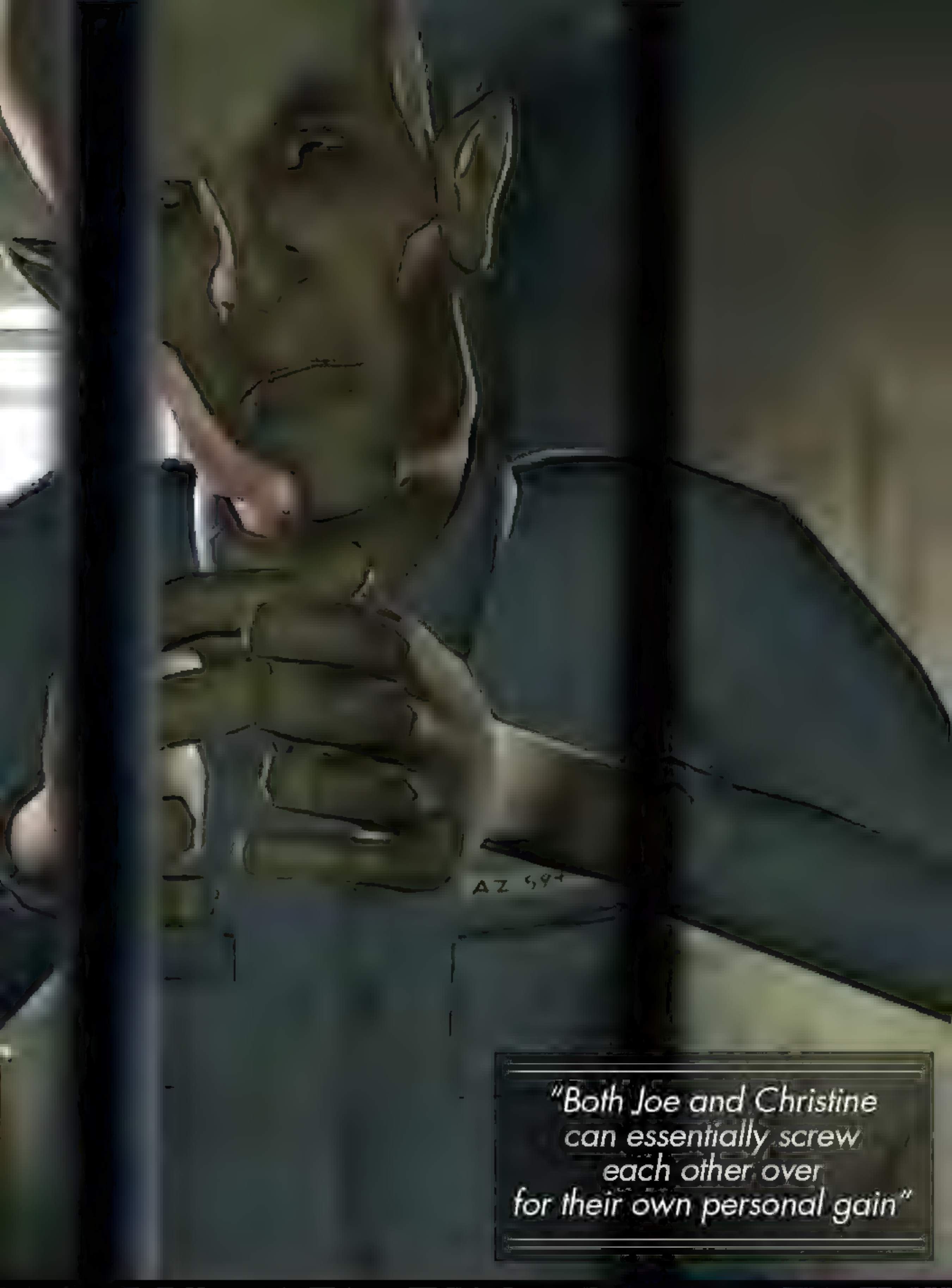
@GameDevGav
1954 Alcatraz is a period drama point and click adventure with beat poets and an interracial couple on the loot hunt

@AdventureGamers
[illegible]
Alcatraz, and we can't wait to
[illegible]

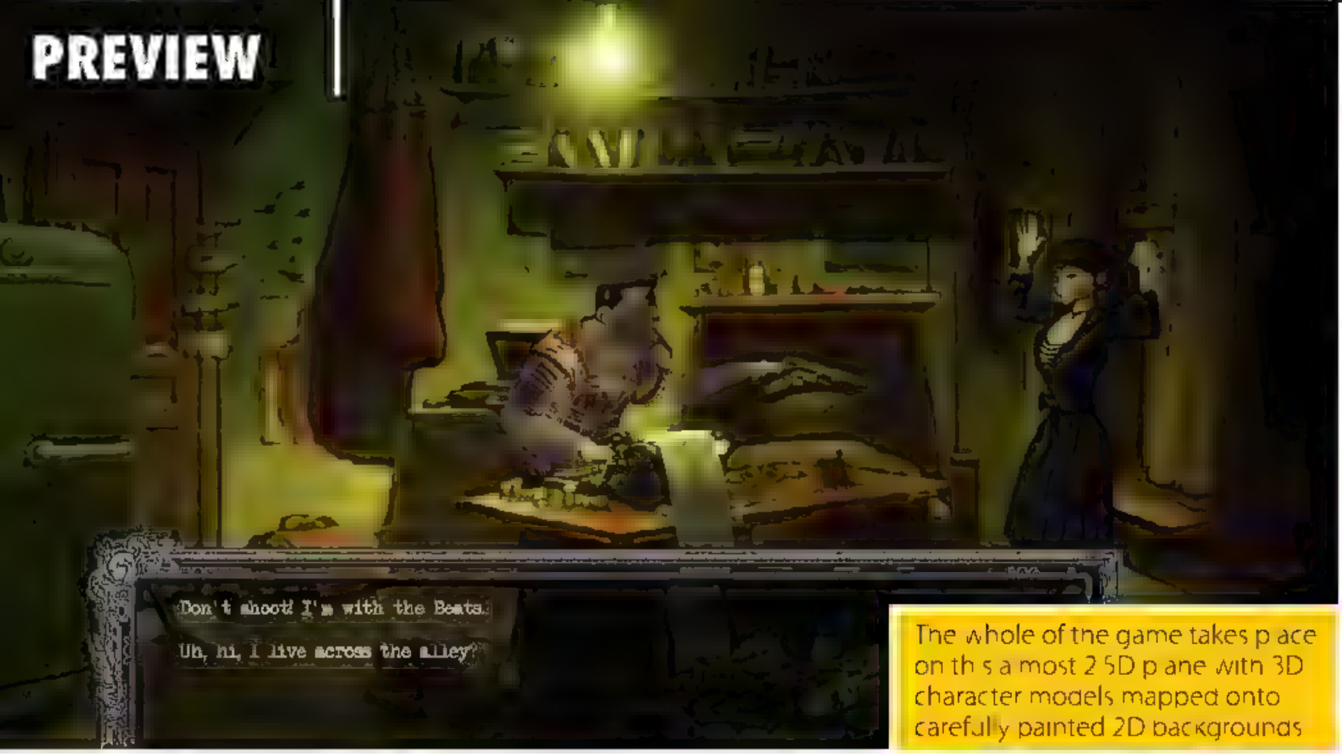
@JimEdgarVoices
[illegible] Hidden Gem You Haven't Heard Of: 1954 Alcatraz [illegible] com/?p=51295

TWEET US @GAMERZINES





> "Both Joe and Christine can essentially screw each other over for their own personal gain"


Don't shoot! I'm with the Beats.
Uh, hi, I live across the alley?

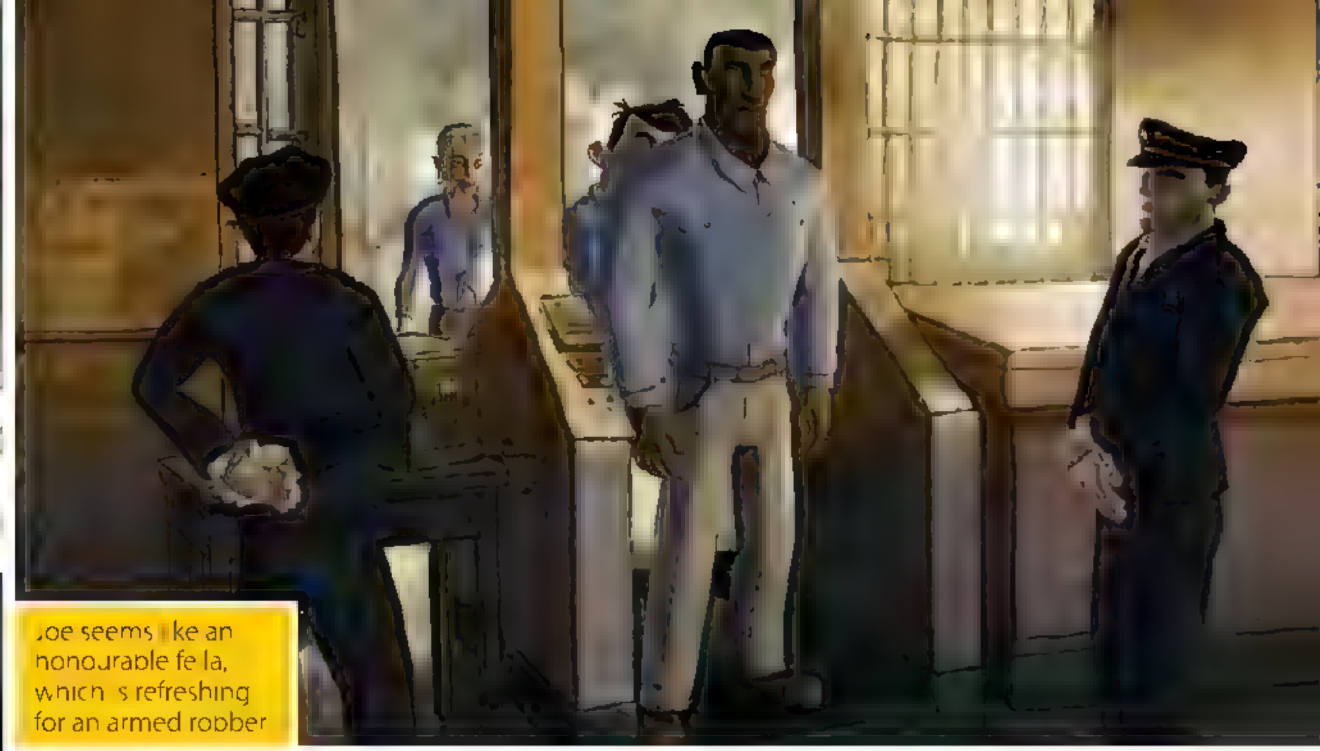
The whole of the game takes place on this almost 2.5D plane with 3D character models mapped onto carefully painted 2D backgrounds

Christine is constantly being pressured by mobsters throughout the campaign

San Francisco in the fifties was a rather 'happening' place

what was said during her last visit – with dialogue choices varying from telling the random muscle everything or adopting the 'dumb broad' approach to throw the hoodlum's off the scent of her husband's score. These decisions have far-reaching consequences, radically altering the critical path of the campaign, and there are sure to be plenty of challenging moral decisions to ponder – should Christine just run off with the money and let her husband rot in Alcatraz or should she help him and maintain their bond before god? This is the 1950s after all, that thing was kind of a big deal back then.

While Christine has the whole of San Francisco to explore, Joe is confined to Alcatraz, but Irresponsible Games are sure to manufacture plenty of drama to keep playing as the criminal entertaining. One scene from



Joe seems like an honourable fella, which is refreshing for an armed robber

the gameplay demo featured the protagonist Joe refusing to conspire with prisoners about yet another escape attempt, while in another the former technician was inside the house of the prison's governor, fixing his wife's faulty record player. That isn't a euphemism we promise, but there will be occasions where guards use the talents of the prison population for their own ends. The nuts and bolts of *1954: Alcatraz* appeared very traditional for a point-and-click experience, with the visuals sharing a lot in common with early Telltale releases. Basic gameplay involved searching scenes for clues, combining items and talking with NPCs in order to further the story, but a suitably atmospheric 1950s soundtrack helps keep the action engrossing.

> *"Irresponsible Games has absolutely nailed down the period detail of this release"*

Irresponsible Games has absolutely nailed down the period detail of this release, but what really interests us is how far are they're willing to take the Alcatraz source material? Will the Penitentiary's most famous prisoners feature? Will issues associated with solitary confinement, violent guards or dropping soap in the shower rooms be communicated to the player at all? Time will only tell, but we have high hopes that this release will make the most out of its iconic setting.

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PUTTY SQUAD

HANDS-ON

The finest platformer the Amiga never had

PS4
PUTTY SQUAD
System 3

PUB: [illegible]
DEV: [illegible]
LAST GAME: FERRARI THE RACE EXPERIENCE
PLATFORM:
PLAYSTATION 4
NINTENDO 3DS, PC
XB [illegible]
PLAYSTATION VITA
ETA: NOVEMBER

The story behind this platformer is a strange one. Released in limited quantities for the SNES and the Mega Drive back in 1994 with an Amiga 1200 version never appearing at retail – despite being reviewed and awarded 92% from the best gaming mag back then, *Amiga Power* – *Putty Squad* has become a bit of an enigma. The kind of rare game which true collectors have in their possession, left never to be played again. *Putty Squad* was effectively destined to wallow in gaming's forgotten past, but thankfully the game's original developer System 3 saw fit to bring the platformer back with new HD visuals.

Cast as a blue ball of putty, players spawn in a number of different elaborately themed zones with the aim of collecting enough stars to finish the level. The malleable and silent protagonist is able to inflate himself (well, we *think* he's male) to float up to high platforms, pick up shields, chuck out grenades and punch enemies (which range from armour-clad dogs to angry frogs) in both directions.

Progress in each level is timed, with exit doors only unlocking once a certain number of stars have been collected. And, refreshingly, completion times are automatically uploaded to an online leaderboard, so players can see how their efforts measure up with the best. Yep, this is an old-school platformer alright, fresh from the days when developers were free to chuck in

1
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0
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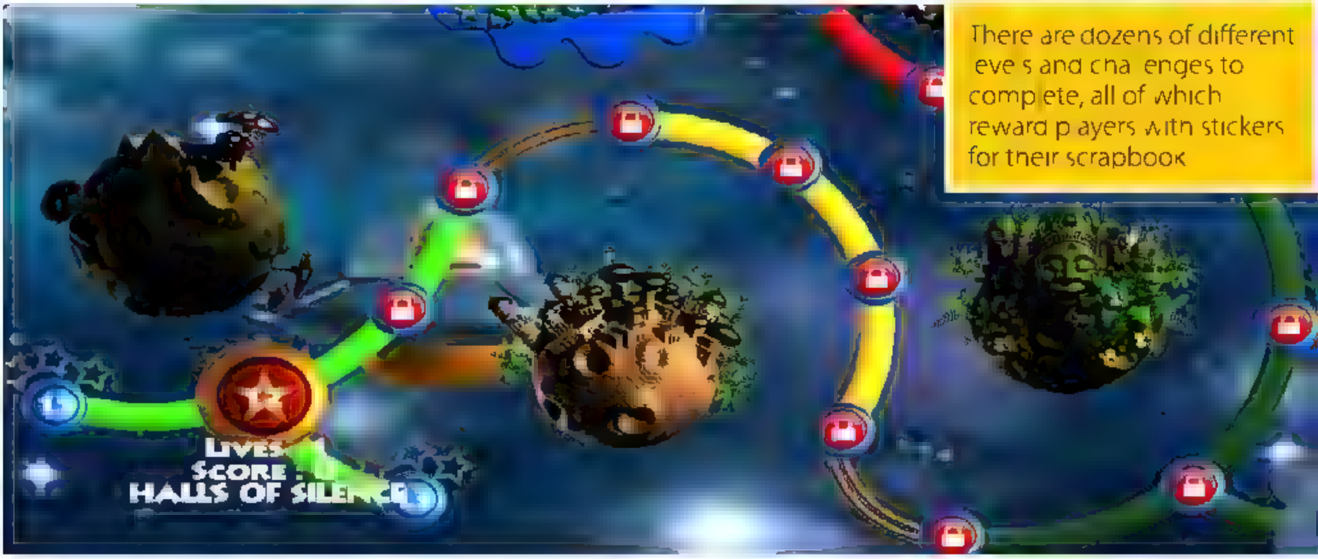
6
READY TO GO
SAVE GAM

LEVEL PLAYTHROUGH



There are dozens of different levels and challenges to complete, all of which reward players with stickers for their scrapbook

double entendres without risking the embarrassment of publishers, and soundtrack loops which are delightfully plinky-plonky.

Putty Squad is a game stuck out of time, but it offers the kind of classic platforming action that still feels revelatory even today. The Commodore Amiga is certainly dead, but its rebellious bedroom coder spirit lives on in games like these. Most ironically, and against all odds, *Putty Squad* is technically a *PlayStation 4* launch game as well. Talk about a hardware upgrade! ■

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THE MANDATE

PUB [illegible]
DEV [illegible]
LAST GAME
PLATFORM [illegible]
ETA [illegible]

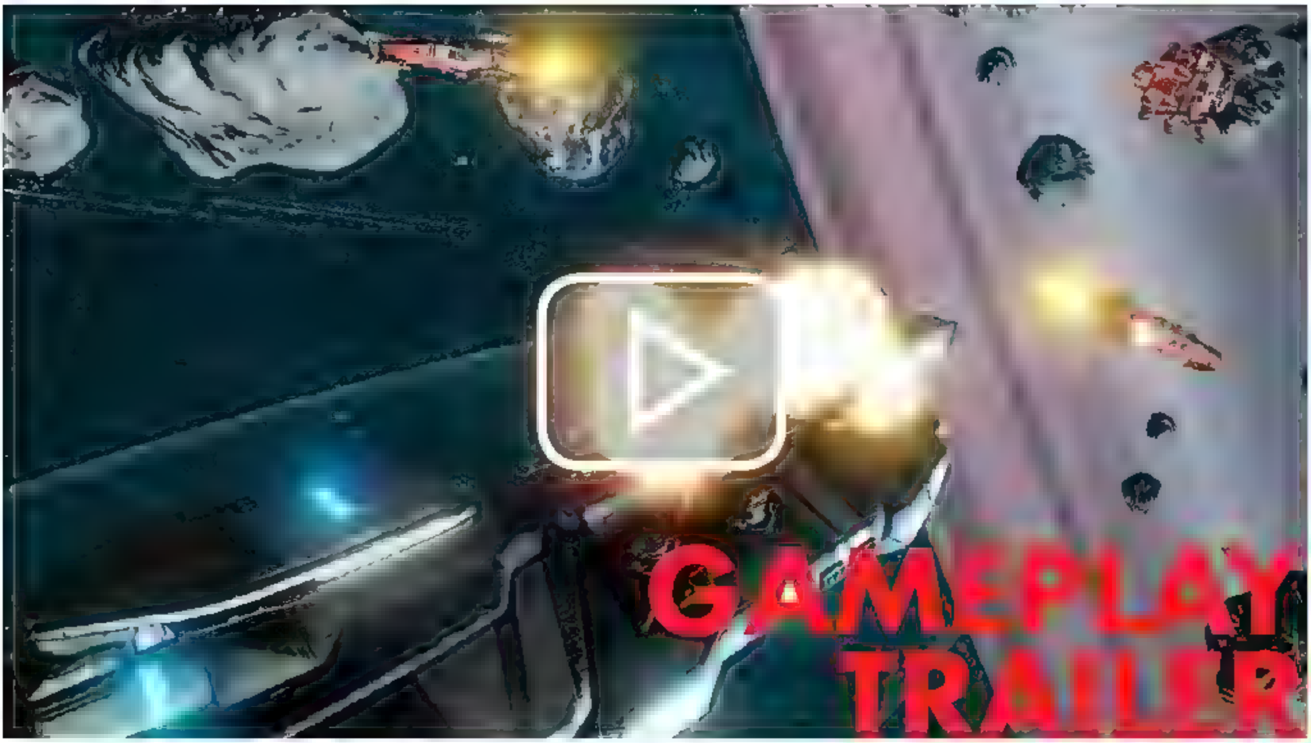
Build and run your own Battlestar

Right, we're just going to come out and say it. If *The Mandate* doesn't reach its $500,000 funding target on Kickstarter before the project runs its course on December 2nd, we're done with the Internet. No more magazine, no more Tweets, no more Facebook fun, no more videos – we're done! Crazy amounts of cash have already been chucked at recent Kickstarter successes like *Elite* and *Star Citizen* and we believe that *The Mandate* belongs in that special group.

The reason for this is quite simple: *The Mandate* homes in on what we love about the prospect of space RPGs. So many games in this sub-genre focus on player choice and the thrill of taming unexplored space, and while *The Mandate* has that, Perinelion are promising that players will care about their individual crew members with subplots and moral decisions based on what's going on inside the player's massive customisable capital ship, as well as outside of it.

> "The Mandate homes in on what we love about the prospect of space RPGs"

It's an approach *Battlestar Galactica* fans will recognise too well and we're intrigued to see how the developers will be able to pull off a similar level of character-filled drama. BioWare's beloved *Mass Effect* series adopted a similar approach to this, but *The*



The Mandate's visuals are still provisional at this point, with Perihelion currently using Unity to power the game

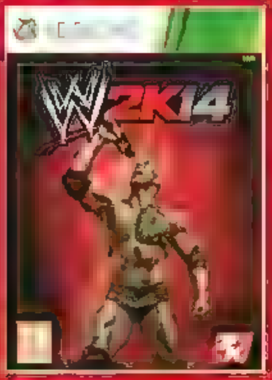
Mandate's drama looks more procedural based with gameplay transitioning between real-time space combat, (think *Star Wars: Empire at War*) and turn-based combat inside your vessel, (hello *Jagged Alliance*) once boarding parties get involved.

The titular empire the player represents has been clearly inspired by Russian history, with a princess named Anastasia to honour, heavy accents and a soundtrack that wouldn't sound out of place in Stalin's dacha, but it all adds to a design ethos which makes this project appear starkly different from its peers.

Obviously a lot still has to be decided with this release, but as we mentioned, we're already wholeheartedly onboard. Space games are slowly but surely experiencing a revival and if *The Mandate* isn't part of that resurgence then something has gone very wrong. ■

4 THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT...

AND A FEW THINGS WE DON'T



PUB 2K GAMES
DEV YUKE'S
LAST GAME
WWE '13
PLATFORMS
XBOX 360 | PS3
[illegible]

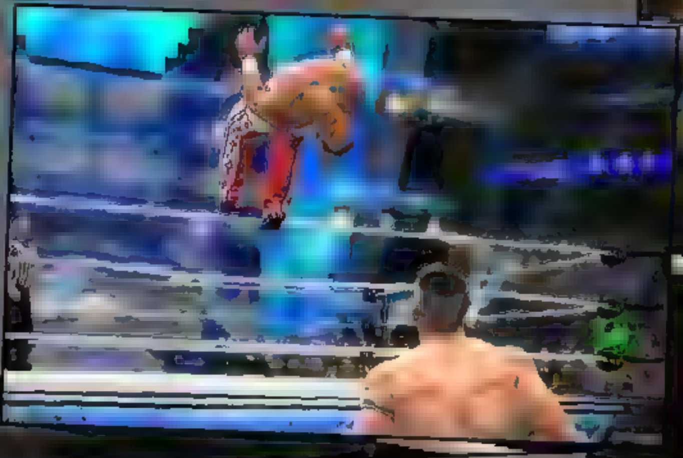
On a gloomy Friday afternoon buried deep inside a crypt, a stone's throw away from London's Farringdon station, 2K invited us into their assuredly spooky abode to sample *WWE 2K14*. Surrounded by giant hanging scrolls and epitaphs dedicated to The Undertaker himself, it's clear, that gaming's annual wrestling series is definitely under new management.

2K has brought new money and new vigour to this prized franchise, and the good news is that these touches have resulted in a much more polished and more ambitious wrestling experience. How exactly has Yuke's used their money? Hold onto your Spandex boys and girls, here are four things we love about *WWE 2K14* and a few things we don't...

> "It's clear that gaming's annual wrestling series is definitely under new management."

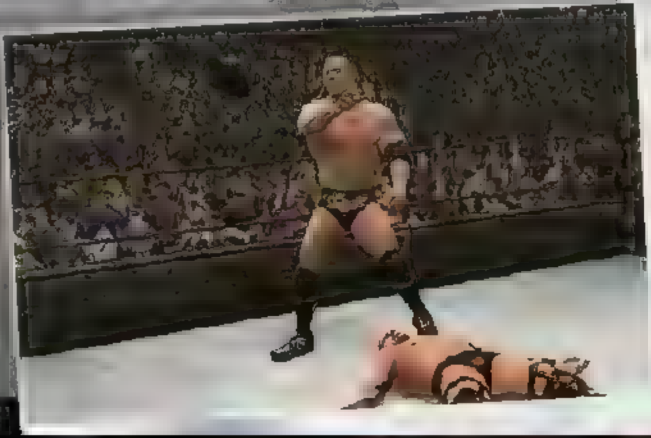
30 YEARS OF WRESTLEMANIA

[illegible]



A REAL SLOBBERKNOCKER!

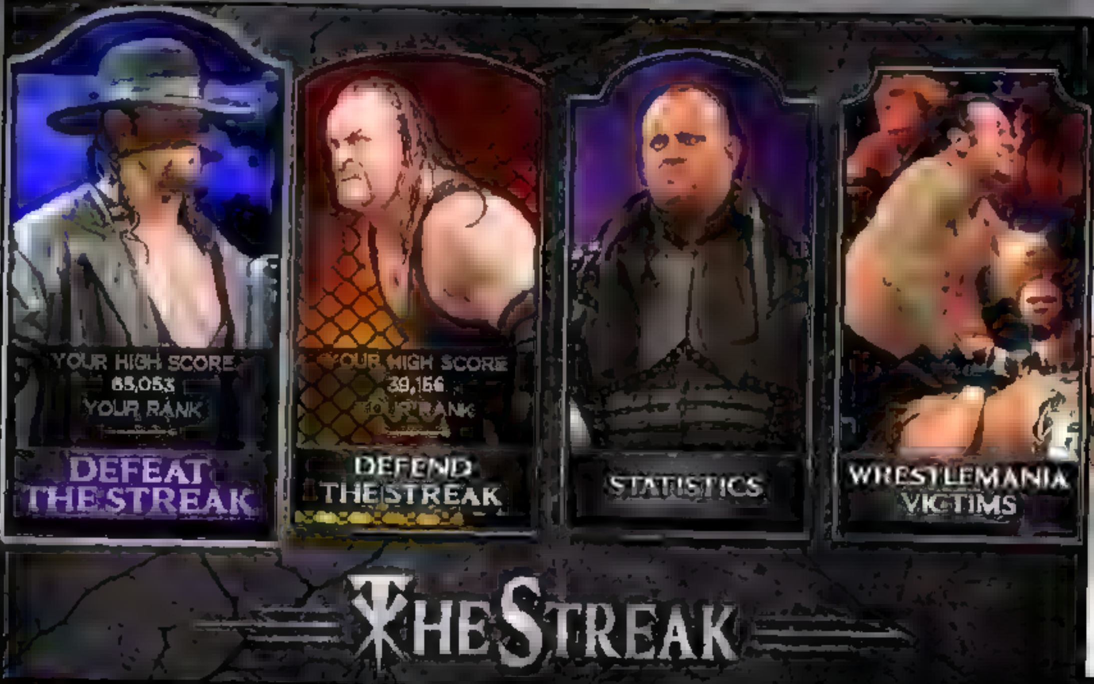
[illegible]



ODE TO 'TAKER

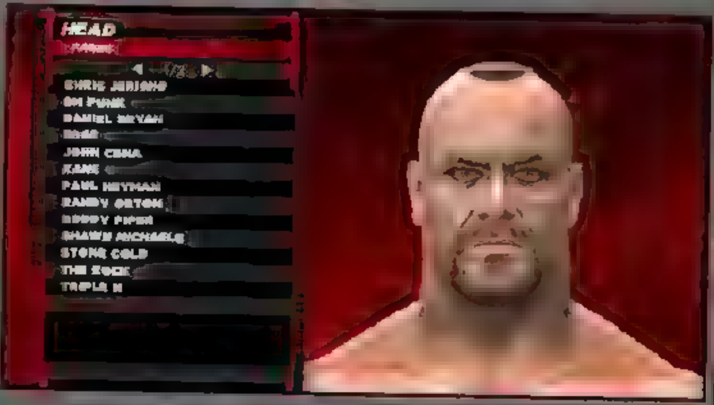
The Undertaker, arguably WWE's biggest star, has been involved in 21 different matches at WrestleMania over the years and hasn't lost a single bout. It would be weird if *WWE 2K14* didn't pay some kind of homage to this amazing streak, so Yuke's has built a special hub dedicated to 'Taker's legend. [illegible] *WWE 2K14*'s hard mode, with the AI turned up [illegible] matter of seconds. We played this mode and [illegible] as Batista (again emulating WrestleMania 23) we were pinned in a matter of minutes. If we successfully defeated Taker we would have been awarded a score, taking into account excitement, showmanship, drama and competitiveness ratings, which would then be uploaded to an online scoreboard, but alas our skills fell short.

Defend the Streak follows a similar principle, with players controlling the Undertaker in a scenario where all his previous victims enter the ring one at a time, thirsty for blood. Success in either of this modes will unlock more art and archive information in the third component: Victims of the Undertaker. This is a essentially a Wiki bursting with information [illegible]


YOUR HIGH SCORE
65,053
YOUR RANK
DEFEAT THE STREAK
YOUR HIGH SCORE
39,156
YOUR RANK
DEFEND THE STREAK
STATISTICS
WRESTLEMANIA VICTIMS
THE STREAK

MORE CHARACTER CREATOR OPTIONS

[illegible]


HEAD
CHRIS JERICHO
CM PUNK
DANIEL BRYAN
EDGE
JOHN CENA
KANE
PAUL HEYMAN
RANDY ORTON
RODDY PIPER
SHAWN MICHAELS
STONE COLD
THE ROCK
TRIPLE H

[illegible]

AND A FEW THINGS WE DON'T LIKE...

[illegible] the creator modes often hidden in the interface. Load times also remain frustratingly long, usually involving a few minutes' wait before matches. Obviously this series is on the cusp of [illegible] reason why The Rock adorns this year's cover, despite the fact that this year's game is very [illegible] Undertaker [illegible] WrestleMania.

Finicky distractions aside, *WWE 2K14* remains a very exciting proposition for both existing and lapsed wrestling fans - especially those who are looking to recreate the halcyon days of Sport Entertainment's Spandex-clad, body hair-free, greased-up history. Sure, all the modern superstars are here in their clean cut PG glory, but it's the return of the true greats [illegible] Undertaker [illegible] hallowed group. How would 'Mr Phenom' fare against 'Macho Man' Randy Savage in his prime? Let's [illegible]

WWE 2K14 IS OUT NOW FOR PLAYSTATION 3 AND XBOX 360

LIVERPOOL
0-1
SOUTHAMPTON

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS WITH... FOOTBALL MANAGER 2014

We pass the latest *FM* to a man who knows his trequartistas

PUB: SEGA
DEV: SPORTS INTERACTIVE
LAST GAME: FOOTBALL MANAGER 2013
PLATFORMS: PC, PLAYSTATION VITA
OUT NOW

The crew behind *FirstLook Magazine* know a lot about games, but when it comes to evaluating a hardcore taste like *Football Manager 2014* we knew we needed someone who really knows their sauce. A maverick. A loose cannon. A person who can name every centre-back who has donned a Liverpool shirt since 1906. We're talking about resident football expert and former *PC Zone* dogsbody, David Brown.

He's penned his impressions of this year's *Football Manager*, and for a person who is usually rather hard to please, he surprisingly enjoyed what he played. Here are his thoughts on what he likes and dislikes about *Football Manager 2014*. Take it away, 'Mr Scouse'...

If you read my previous article in an earlier issue about *Total War: Rome II* then you'll know what's coming. It's not a review, it's more an analysis. Perhaps with the emphasis more on the first four letters, if you like. If you don't, stick it up your first four letters and the rest of us can muse on the following points.

"Make Mine a Classic"

First off, let's waste no time and strap the match engine to the rack, brutally

ACTIVE
FOOTBALL MANAGER HANDHELD
JustGiving
SpecialEffect
SpecialEffect
Give info about crime anonymously
Osvaldo

from his playmakers

torturing it until it reveals all its positives and negatives. For me, there are two versions of the match engine: one in Classic mode and one in the 'full fat' Career. This sounds silly, because there aren't actually two. However, the way things play out, the way you have much more control in the latter, makes things feel like you're playing two different games.

It all comes down to morale, a crucial factor in how your team will do. An easy way to think of it in our binary domain is like a modifier to a player's abilities. In boardgame-speak, you'd roll a dice when a player takes a shot and apply the 'morale modifier' to it. Superb might make

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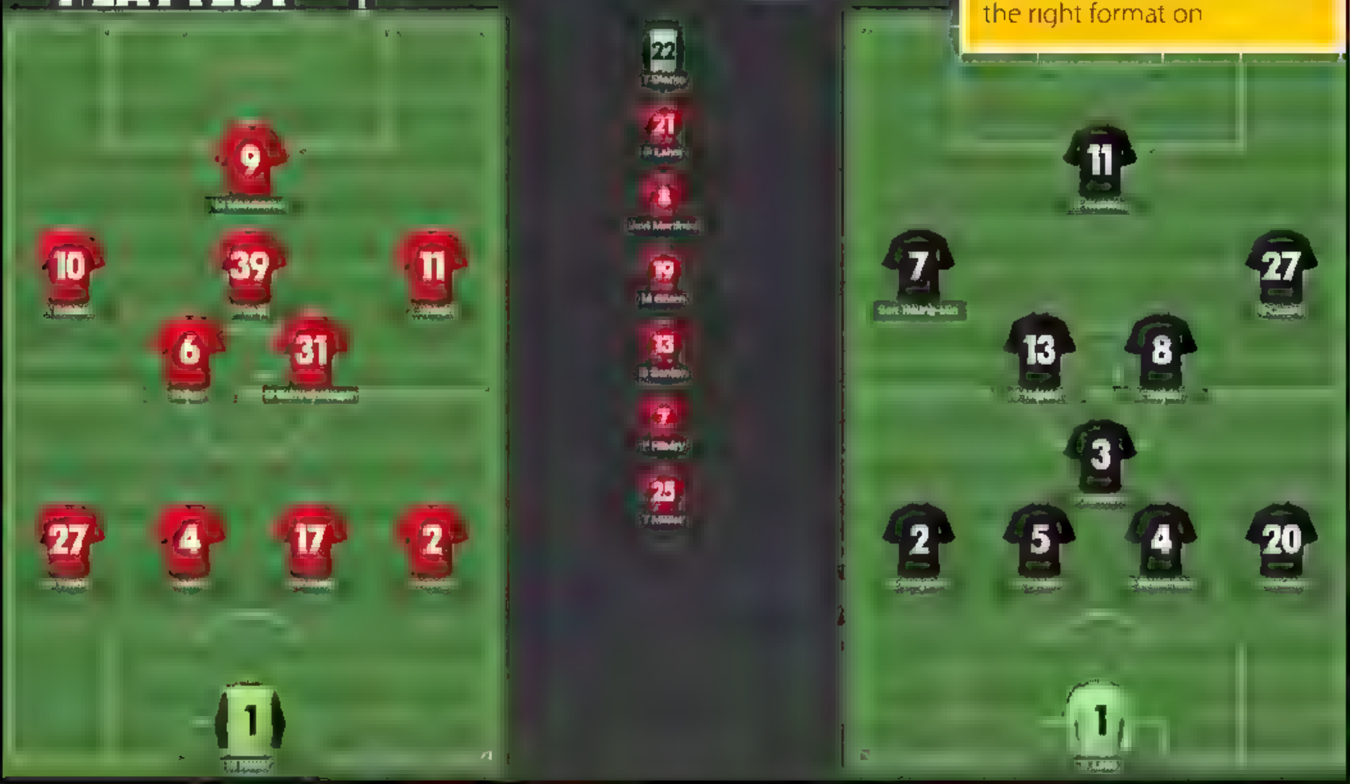


Fiddling with player roles is just as important as choosing the right formation

it +3 and Abysmal might be -3. Anyway, if you can boost your team's morale with some passionate words in a teamtalk or a meeting, or even talk to individuals pre-match and praise them, well, it's all good. It gives you the chance to make it not just about results. Even the slightest increase could make a huge difference.

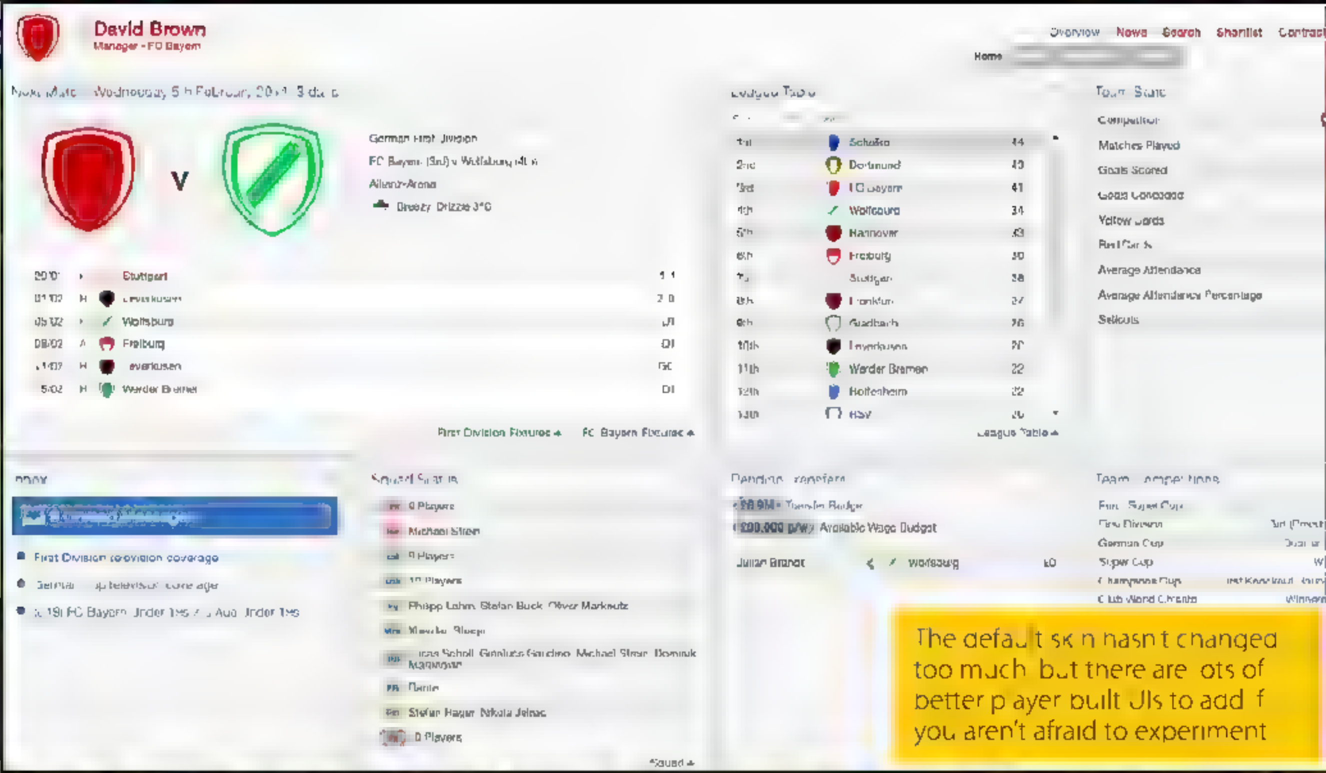
So when in Classic mode you realise you can't do any of that, it kicks you right in the spherical objects. The only way to change morale is to win, but if you're not winning, you've got poor morale. And are therefore more likely to do badly. And then you'll be on worse morale. Etcetera.

Classic mode should be great, but I can't play it. I can't handle not being given the ability to affect morale. There are other issues with it, as well as the obvious boon of it being a stripped down version of Career and therefore less bloated for poor quality machines (and for those wanting to burn through seasons) but to me it's not playable, purely because of this morale thing.

Career or Bust

Anyway, let's get over the Classic mode. Lack of control isn't an issue in Career. This isn't just the meat of the game; this is the meat, two veg and lashing of delicious gravy of the game. Every year Sports Interactive add a ludicrous amount of stuff (I think it was 800 new things this time) and you'll still be discovering fresh stuff right up until you move on to *2015*.

Want to know the best new thing? It's when making a quick substitution, you can make the new player have a different role (say, changing him to a winger instead of an inside forward) right from that window. No more


David Brown
Manager - FC Bayern
Overview
News
Search
Shortlist
German First Division
Allianz-Arena
First Division Fixtures
FC Bayern Fixtures
League Table
Squad Status
Pending Transfers
Team Competitions

The default skin hasn't changed too much, but there are lots of better player built UIs to add if you aren't afraid to experiment

faffing about going into the main tactics bit, all done in a quick flick of the mouse wheel. So good!

Managers now get more irate with each other more often, which is fun. You still can't pick a fight at will, but it's a start. Next year, please let us have a go at anyone we want to, SI. I want to mock Jose Mourinho out of the blue. I want to say David Moyes is out of his depth outside of a press conference. Maybe even say good ol' Gollum would make a better manager than him.

> "Managers now get more irate with each other more often, which is fun"

Poor form results in boardroom summonses on a more regular basis, with two humiliating sackings from North Ferriby the results of my first effort this year. It wasn't my fault, it was the keeper who seemed to enjoy conceding goals. Maybe he'd been betting against the club.

Actually, going back to the match engine, the goalkeepers – at least at the time of writing – are puzzling. While not as prone to blunders as in the first Beta release, I do feel they don't come to punch or claim the ball in the air enough. This perhaps is why there are too many headed goals being scored. Unless the German league has taken to playing like old-school Wimbledon and has countless teams pumping it long into the box for a big man, the percentage of goals conceded by my Bayern Munich team from headers (and scored from them too, to be fair) is curious to say the least.

All complaints aside though, this is the most compelling version of the game since, well, *2012*. Last year was an aberration, the engine just not making enough sense and, to me, feeling too random or reliant on

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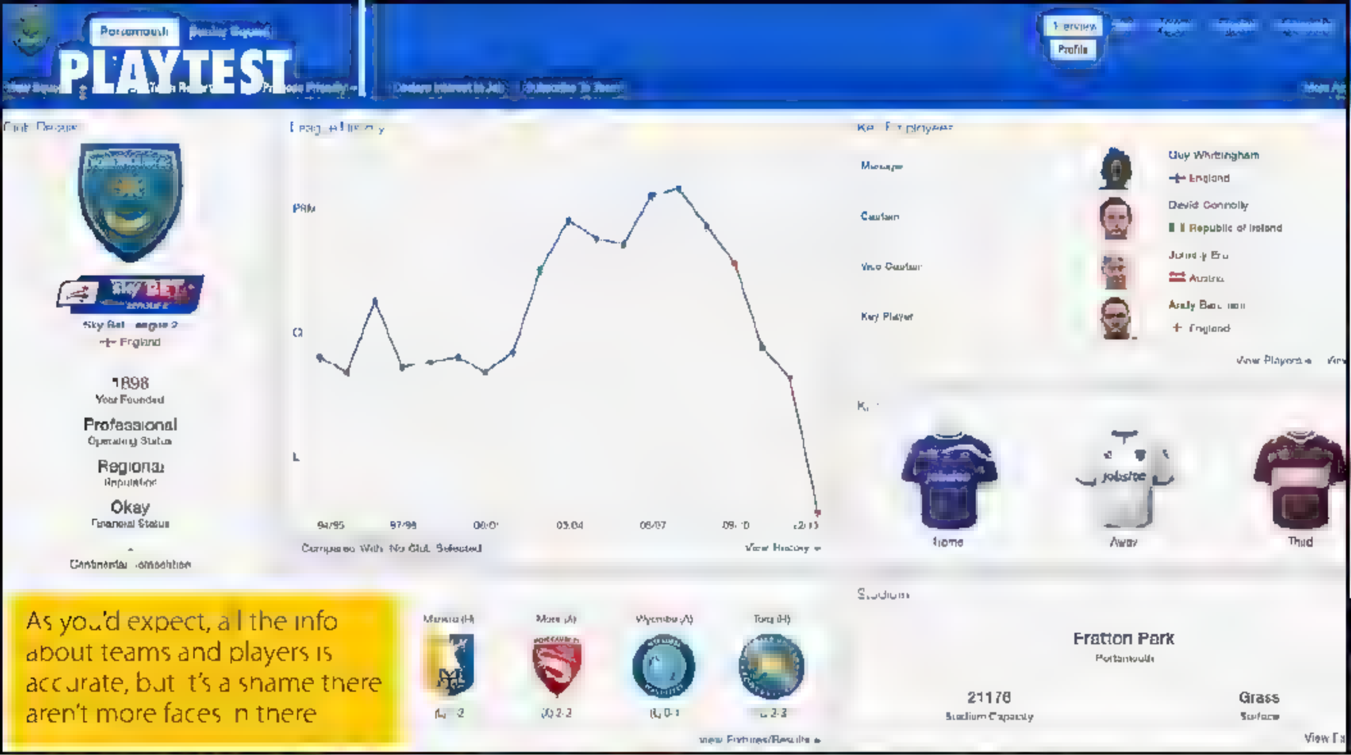

Portsmouth
Playing Squad
Overview
Profile
Club Details
League History
Key Club players
Manager
Captain
Vice Captain
Key Player
Guy Whittingham
England
David Connolly
Republic of Ireland
Johnny Ertl
Austria
Andy Barcham
England
View Players
Sky Bet League 2
England
1898
Year Founded
Professional
Operating Status
Regional
Reputation
Okay
Financial Status
Continental Competition
94/95
97/98
00/01
03/04
06/07
09/10
12/13
Compared With: No Club Selected
View History
Kits
Home
Away
Third
Mansfield (H)
Morecambe (A)
Wycombe (A)
Torquay (H)
View Fixtures/Results
Stadium
Fratton Park
Portsmouth
21178
Stadium Capacity
Grass
Surface

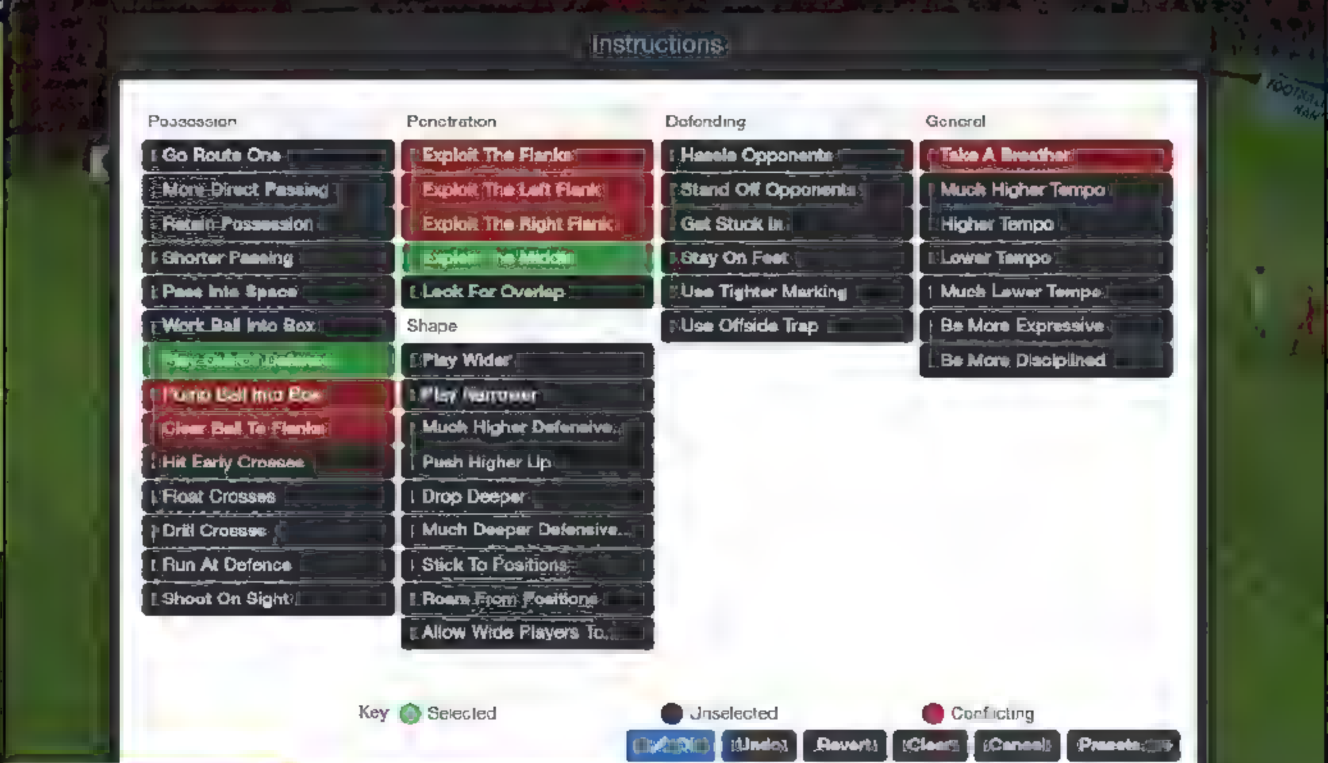
As you'd expect, all the info about teams and players is accurate, but it's a shame there aren't more faces in there

pre-match factors. This time, while I'm not saying this doesn't ever happen as there'll still be some "Oh come on, this was rigged" flights of conspiratorial fantasy, actions during matches do make more sense. When you concede, it's more obvious why, and you can attempt to address it. When you score, you can see better why you did and try to play to that.

All this added context is because of the best thing they've done for many a year: removal of the slider tactics system. It's all shouts now, so no wondering whether having team width on five notches or six is the best thing. Just say "play wider" and they will. It might not be as precise, but does Brendan Rodgers adjust a slider to make Liverpool defend five metres higher up the pitch? It's a radical change for a series that had perhaps hit a little bit of a brick wall last year. Something had to give and the sliders were sacrificed to the gods of progress. Chances are you'll play this version longer than 2013, I know I will. All we need now is the Japanese league properly implemented, though apparently, due to licensing issues, that'll never happen. Sad face.

Also it's worth doffing my hat to the Beta SI had running before *FM 14*'s release. People question the idea of selling an unfinished product to players, but with *FM* it makes perfect sense. Going into the product knowing there'll be some issues gives people a sense of being part of 'fixing' it, plus they'll not be angered by said glitches as much as if they'd spent cash on a full release and found their keepers repeatedly punching the ball into their own net. While I'm not

> *"All said and done, I can only recommend FM 14"*


Instructions
Possession
Go Route One
More Direct Passing
Retain Possession
Shorter Passing
Pass Into Space
Work Ball Into Box
Play Out Of Defence
Pump Ball Into Box
Clear Ball To Flanks
Hit Early Crosses
Float Crosses
Drill Crosses
Run At Defence
Shoot On Sight
Penetration
Exploit The Flanks
Exploit The Left Flank
Exploit The Right Flank
Exploit The Middle
Look For Overlap
Shape
Play Wider
Play Narrower
Much Higher Defensive...
Push Higher Up
Drop Deeper
Much Deeper Defensive...
Stick To Positions
Roam From Positions
Allow Wide Players To...
Defending
Hassle Opponents
Stand Off Opponents
Get Stuck In
Stay On Feet
Use Tighter Marking
Use Offside Trap
General
Take A Breather
Much Higher Tempo
Higher Tempo
Lower Tempo
Much Lower Tempo
Be More Expressive
Be More Disciplined
Key
Selected
Unselected
Conflicting
Undo
Revert
Clear
Cancel
Presets

Shouts yes, sliders no

advocating this as a method for all games (and I'd like to see it implemented in more of a "pay half now, pay half if you want the full product" thing to make it less of a risk for customers), it's still a good option.

All said and done, I can only recommend *FM 14*. There are some issues, but in a game this complex, there'll always be some. On the whole, and apart from the Classic mode, it's a significant step forward from *2013*. If you were disappointed with last year's game, the good news is *FM 14* is a marked improvement. Just don't go for Classics mode for goodness sake. Be a man and go full Career instead to drink in the immersive, simmy goodness.

Thanks for your insights, David. Next month we'll give another release the hair dryer treatment.

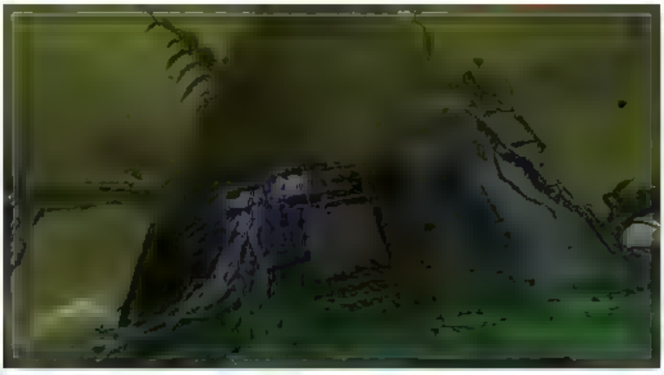
DLC & UGC Round-Up

Guild Wars 2: Nightmare Tower

PUB: NCSOFT
DEV: ArenaNet
OUT NOW

Halloween is a big deal in MMORPG-town, so much so that every online game out there had some special content to celebrate the darkest holiday of the year. Despite this competition, *Guild Wars 2* still stole the spooky show with Mad King Thorn once again taking over Lion's Arch, in addition to yet another all-new Living Story update involving returning characters Lady Kasmeer Meade and Marjory Delaqua investigating a mysterious toxic tower which has been erected by the Krait in Kessex Hills.

This isn't the first time this magazine has praised ArenaNet's subscription-free MMORPG, and if they keep up the rate and calibre of these updates hitting servers we're sure it won't be the last. ■



Rome II: Blood and Gore

PUB: SEGA
DEV: Creative Assembly
OUT NOW

After a disappointingly bug-laden launch, Creative Assembly have been working morning, noon and night to get *Total War: Rome II* up to the kind of spec fans expect of the series. Everything from load times to AI tactics have been tweaked in a host of free updates, with the developer at the same time offering up new factions for players to tinker with.

This month, Creative Assembly adopted a more visceral approach with a piece of £1.99 DLC that enabled decapitations, mutilations and mass haemorrhaging in the game's reliably beautiful and destructive battle engine. You've been warned folks, this DLC isn't for the faint of heart. The first person to decapitate the enemy General wins. ■

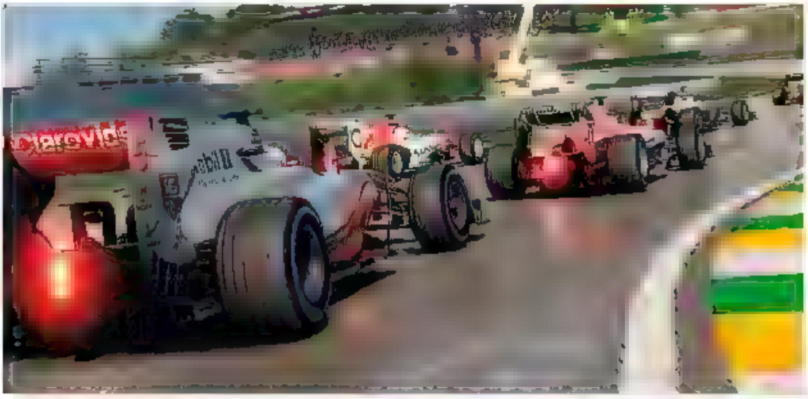
F1 2013: Realistic Damage

UGC

DEV: Cromiell
FIND IT: racedepartment.com
OUT NOW

If you read our detailed Playtest of *F1 2013* in last month's issue, you'd know that the latest entry in Codemasters' acclaimed officially licensed racing series is just a few tweaks away from greatness. One of the issues we came across involved a lacklustre damage system which proved far too forgiving when two cars came together or clipped a wall.

For the second year in a row, experienced modder Cromiell has once again released an effective damage modifier which makes the cars behave much more like their real-life flimsy carbon fibre counterparts, with tyres puncturing, front wings flying off and rear wings collapsing under contact. Great stuff! ■



Torchlight 2: Unofficial Expansion

UGC

DEV: Mnk
FIND IT: Steam Workshop
OUT NOW

Runic Games are still keeping quiet about the possibility of *Torchlight 2* getting an expansion, but where the developer falters the modder prevails. Mnk's work includes an all-new mature campaign boasting two new acts, six new sidequests, four new PvP levels, returning bosses, new allies and, impressively, over 100 new areas to explore. We'd be very surprised if Runic Games didn't offer up an official *Torchlight 2* expansion later on down the line, but this community-made content should help that wait go a bit quicker. ■

Magicka: Dungeons & Gargolyes

DLC

PUB: Paradox Int.
DEV: Pieces Int.
OUT NOW

Paradox Interactive has released the final DLC for *Magicka*, over two years after the RPG first launched. The *Dungeons & Gargolyes* content concludes the story told in the *Dungeons & Daemons* expansion and asks players to return to the buried city of Aldrheim where they'll discover new spells, monsters and jokes to enjoy. This new content coincides with launch of *The Wizards of The Square Tablet spin-off;* a tablet-friendly version of *Magicka* available for Android and iOS, as well as PC. Interestingly those who get this touchscreen-optimised experience for PC will get all of the microtransaction items available in the mobile versions for no extra cost. Players can also transfer their in-game goodies between different versions as well, avoiding micro-transactions entirely. ■

SWTOR: Galactic Starfighter

DLC

PUB: EA
DEV: BioWare Austin
ETA: 3rd December

Launching without a proper space combat component was one of the biggest mistakes BioWare Austin made with *Star Wars: The Old Republic*. After the multiplayer freeform air combat of *Star Wars: Galaxies*, *SWTOR*'s on-rails single-player missions were always going to be received poorly. The next expansion, *Galactic Starfighter*, is being designed to address those complaints by introducing new freeform space combat in PvP missions that involve escorting capital ships, defending VIP craft and straight-up dogfights.

X-Wing versus Tie Fighter this certainly ain't, but for BioWare Austin, *Galactic Starfighter* certainly represents a step in the right direction. Subscribers can sample this content as early as this December. ■

Duke Nukem 64

UGC

DEV: Fox_666
FIND IT: www.moddb.com/mods/dn64
OUT NOW

The title says it all really. Fox_666 has remade *Duke Nukem 64* in *Duke Nukem 3D*, utilising all of the assets from the former console exclusive. Our love for Mr Nukem was well and truly trashed with Gearbox Software's astonishingly awful *Duke Nukem Forever*, but no doubt there's a big audience out there who are looking to relive the blond trash talker's assuredly violent glory days. Retro gaming fans, in particular, will love this mod and all its blurry goodness. ■

Half-Life 2: WWI Source

UGC

DEV: WWI Source Dev Team
FIND IT: www.moddb.com/mods/ww1-source/news
OUT NOW

WWI Source is the only total conversion mode for *Half-Life 2* which recreates battlefields from the Great War in all their dreadful glory. First released in Feb, 2010, the multiplayer mod has attracted a massive following, with accurately recreated guns and period-specific trench warfare-inspired gameplay, including artillery strikes and chemical warfare.

After three years in the public domain, the team behind *WWI Source* is looking for fresh talent to help put up the next version of the game which will boast improved gameplay, better sound and new features. Specifically, the development team is looking for coders at the moment, and if you feel as though you have the skills and the time to help then check out the modDB project page link above for more information. ■

NEXT MONTH

SOUTH PARK: THE STICK OF TRUTH

GRAN TURISMO 6

ISSUE 12: NOV 28TH

BEST GAMES OF 2013 AWARDS

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